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BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF UDASIS : REFLECTIONS IN UDASI BODH

*Balwinder Jit**

Udasi Bodh is a most important manuscript of the 19th century written by Sant Rein who is known to us as a great literary figure of his times, not much is known about Sant Rein's early life and his education. He is said to have lived for more than a century. Undoubtedly, he was a great missionary saint committed to the Udasi tradition of his times, nearly two dozen literary compositions representing a very wide variety of genre are ascribed to Sant Rein by a well informed litterateur Piara Singh Padam.¹

Among these, the most prominent ones are : *Nanak Vijay Granth*, *Man Parbodh*, *Nanak Bodh*, *Udasi Bodh* and *Siharfian*.² Some of these are bigger in size than many others. Of these, four *Siharfian*³ and more than 150 *majhan*⁴ are all in Punjabi.

There is a textual evidence in the *Udasi Bodh* that it is the fifth poetic composition of Sant Rein. The other four works written previously include his *Man Parbodh*, *Nanak Vijay*, *Nanak Bodh* and *Bachan*

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1. Piara Singh Padam, *Mahatma Sant Rein*, p.3.

2. *Loc. Cit.*

3. Rattan Singh Jaggi, *Sahit Kosh*, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 286.

‘ਸੀ’ ਭਾਵ ਤੀਹ ਅਤੇ ਹਰਫ਼ੀ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਾਲੀ। ਅਰਬੀ ਵਰਣਮਾਲਾ ਦੇ 28 ਅੱਖਰ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅੰਤ ਵਿਚ ਆਲਿਫ਼ ਤੇ ਲਾਮ ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਦੋ ਬੰਦ, ਹੋਰ ਲਿਖੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਇਉਂ ਕੁੱਲ 30 ਬੰਦ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਰਬੀ ਫ਼ਾਰਸੀ ਵਰਣਮਾਲਾ ਦੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਰੂਪ ਲਿਖੀ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਸੀਹਰਫੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਫ਼ਾਰਸੀ ਵਰਣਮਾਲਾ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਅੱਖਰ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆ ਕੇ ਲਿਖੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜਿਵੇਂ : ਅਲਫ਼ ਆਖ ਸਖੀ ਸਿਆਲਕੋਟ ਅੰਦਰ।

4. ਮਾਝਾਂ : ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਕਾਵਿ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਕਾਵਿ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਬਿਰਹਾ-ਵਰਣਨ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮਾਝ ਇਕ ਰਾਗ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਵੀ ਹੈ।

Sangreh.⁵ The *Udasi Bodh* is a Braj work which was completed in BK 1915 i.e. 1858 A.D.⁶ It has thirty two chapters containing 320 folios and 2520 *Slokas*. It is in size 14x12 cms. Each folio contains 12 lines. From the point of view of its literary and historical value, it seems to be more important than any of his other works. Hence, its value as a source for socio-cultural history of the Punjab in general and the diverse beliefs and practices of the *Udasis* in particular needs to be underlined.

The evidence of the *Udasi Bodh* is also very helpful to know the views of the *Udasis* on the nature of God and several other religious and Philosophical issues and concepts such as *maya*, *bhakti*, *mukti*, *vairag*, *atman*, *jnan* or *gyan*, *karam* or the theory of transmigration of the soul, *pap*, *pun*, *dukh* and the five evils, i.e. *kam*, *krodh*, *lobh*, *moh* and *ahankar*.

The *Udasi Bodh* clearly reveals that the *Udasis* believed in the concept of *Advait Brahm* (Non-dualism). To reinforce their belief of *Advait Brahm* they seek support in the *Vedas*.⁷ They used both Hindu and Sikh epithets for God: *Brahm*, *Satnam*, *Govind*, *Gopal*, *Ram*, *Krishan*, *Vishan* (*Vishnu*), *Waheguru*, *Vasudev*, *Shiv*, *Mahadev* and *Narain*.⁸

5. *Udasi Bodh*, ff. 316^b and 317^a :

ਪਾਂਚ ਗਰੰਥ ਕਰਾਇ ਗੁਰ ਹਮ ਤੇ ਆਪ ਸੁ ਜਾਨ॥
ਜੀਵਨ ਕੀ ਕਲਿਆਣ ਹਿਤ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਆਪ ਸੁ ਮਾਨ॥
ਅਜਿਲ॥ ਮਨ ਪਰਬੋਧ ਗਰੰਥ ਸੁ ਪਰਥਮਿ ਜਾਨਿਐ॥
ਦੁਤਿਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਿਜੈ ਗਰੰਥ ਮਹਾਨਿਐ॥
ਤ੍ਰਿਤਿਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਬੋਧ ਗਰੰਥ ਸੁ ਜਾਨ ਰੇ॥
ਚੌਥਿਐ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਗਰੰਥ ਸੁ ਚਤੁਰਥ ਮਾਨ ਰੇ॥
ਪੰਚਮ ਏਹੁ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਬੋਧ ਮਹਾਨਿਐ॥

6. *Ibid.*, ff. 319^b and 320^a :

ਛਪੇ ਛੰਦ॥ ਸੰਮਤਿ ਉਨੀ ਸੈ ਸੋਲ੍ਹਾ ਪੁਨਿ ਬਰਸਿ ਪਛਾਨੇ॥
ਪਾਚ ਮਾਸ ਦਿਨ ਪਾਚ ਬਰਸਿ ਤੇ ਕਮ ਪਹੁਚਾਨੇ॥
ਮੰਗਲਵਾਰ ਬਿਜੈ ਦਸਮੀ ਸੁਭ ਘਰੀ ਉਦਾਰੇ॥
ਭਯੋ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਪੁਰਨ ਤਾਂ ਦਿਨ ਲੇਹੁ ਬਿਚਾਰੇ॥
..... ਸੰਮਤਿ ੧੬੧੫॥ ਸਲੋਕ ੨੫੨੦॥

7. *Udasi Bodh*, ff. 222^b and 223^a :

ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਏਕ ਅਦ੍ਵੈਤ ਬੇਦ ਨਿਤ ਭਾਖਈ॥
.....
ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਵਿਖੋ ਦ੍ਵੈਤ ਨਾਹਿ ਐਸੇ ਬੇਦ ਭਾਖੇ ਤਾਂਹਿ॥

ਕਹੇ ਸੰਤ ਰੈਣ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਅਦ੍ਵੈਤਿ ਜਾਨਿਐ॥

8. *Ibid.*, f. 234^b; See also *Ibid.*, f. 244^a :

ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕੇ ਅਨੇਕ ਨਾਮ ਕਹੇ ਕੁਛੁ ਸੁਖ ਧਾਮ॥
ਜਾਪਕ ਕੋ ਮੋਖ ਧਾਮ ਦੇਹਿ ਸੋ ਮਹਾਨ ਰੇ॥
ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਨਾਮ ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਗੋਪਾਲ ਨਾਮ॥
ਰਾਮ ਔਰ ਕ੍ਰਿ ਨ ਬਿ ਨ ਉਰ ਆਲ ਰੇ॥
ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਸਦੇਵ ਸਦਾ ਸਿਵ ਮਹਾਦੇਵ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਰਾਯਣ ਪੈ ਦਤ ਨਾਮ ਜਾਨ ਰੇ॥

They, however, believed in the unity of *Brahm*,⁹ at the same time, they believed that *Brahm* was both *nirguna* (attribute less) and *saguna* (with attributes). He (the God) became *saguna* as the creator of the Universe.¹⁰

The *Udasīs* believed that the universe was created and protected by *Brahm* Himself is *maya*.¹¹ Their belief in *Vedantic maya* makes human desire unreal.¹² The practical manifestations of *Brahm* are 'wealth, women, sons, powers, status, comfort and food' which call forth man's lust, greed and pride. He who accepts and seeks fulfilment in attachment to such worldly things is a victim of *maya*.

In the state of ignorance (*agyan*, *avidiya*) man feels proud of his possessions and commits sinful acts, as a result of which he ultimately suffers sorrows (*dukh*) in the world.¹³ Immersed in ignorance, having no knowledge of God, is merely a *jiv*.¹⁴

The *Udasīs* believed in the 84 lac transmigrations of the soul.¹⁵ Living

9. *Udasi Bodh*, f. 3^b :

ਰਾਮ ਏਕ ਤਹਿ ਨਾਮ ਅਨੇਕ॥
ਦੇਖੇ ਕਰ ਮਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਬਿਬੇਕ॥

10. *Ibid.*, ff. 214^b, 215^a, 3^b and 4^a :

ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਤੇ ਜਗ ਉਤਿਪੰਨ ਭਯੋ ਤਿਉ ਜਾਨ ਰੇ॥
ਭਾਸੈ ਜਗ ਸੋ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਮਾਹਿ ਪਹਚਾਨ ਰੇ॥

11. *Udasi Bodh*, f. 17^a :

ਇਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਜਾਨੋ ਮਾਯਾ॥
ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਪਰੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕੀ ਛਾਯਾ॥

12. *Ibid.*, f. 249^{ab} :

ਬੇਦ ਜੁ ਭਾਖੇ ਮਾਯਾ ਤਿਸਕਾ ਸੁਨੋ ਬਿਚਾਰ॥
ਬੇਦ ਵਾਕ ਭੂਠਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਾਨੈ ਸਭ ਸੰਸਾਰ॥ ੯੦॥
ਇਸਕੇ ਉਰ ਜੋ ਕਲਪਨਾ ਇਹੀ ਸੁ ਮਾਯਾ ਜਾਨ॥
ਇਹੀ ਸੁ ਮਾਯਾ ਬੇਦ ਨੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹੀ ਬਖਾਨ॥

13. *Udasi Bodh*, ff. 16^a, 17^b and 22^a :

ਜੀਵ ਸੀਵ ਦੋਨੋ ਦੁਖੀ ਪਰੇ ਸੁ ਮਾਯਾ ਮਾਹਿ॥
ਸੁੱਧ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕੇ ਗਯਾਨ ਬਿਨ ਸੁਖ ਸੁਪਨ ਭੀ ਨਾਹਿ॥

14. *Ibid.*, f. 22^a :

ਬਹੁਰ ਅਵਿਦਿਯਾ ਮਾਹਿ ਪਰਯੋ ਜੋ ਜਾਨ ਰੇ॥
ਹੋ ਜੀਵ ਨਾਮ ਤਹਿ ਪਰਯੋ ਸਿੱਖਯ ਮਹਾਨ ਰੇ॥

15. *Udasi Bodh*, ff. 4^b and 55^a :

ਮਿਸਰਤ ਕਰਮ ਜੁ ਕਰੈ ਉਦਾਰੇ॥
ਜਨਮੈ ਮਰੈ ਸੁ ਬਾਰਮ ਬਾਰੇ॥

beings suffered as a result of their actions in the past.¹⁶ Their actions determined future life, their birth and death.¹⁷

The *Udasis* staunchly believed in renunciation (*Vairag*).¹⁸ *Vairag* involved in the renunciation not only of *kam* and *Artha* but also of *dharma*.¹⁹ Significantly, they believed that those who attached themselves with God owed everything of their own to Him, and lived in this world fully detached just like the lotus-flower in the water.²⁰

Sant Rein has all praise for those who detached themselves from worldly pleasures; they are '*sants*'. Their significance in life is also clearly pointed out.²¹ the '*sants*' are equated with *nirguna*

16. *Ibid.*, 66^b :

ਪੁਰਬ ਪਾਪ ਕਰਮ ਸੋ ਜਾਨ॥
ਭੋਗੇ ਜੀਵ ਸੁ ਜਾਨ ਮਹਾਨ॥

17. *Ibid.*, ff. 47^{ab} and 48^a :

ਕਰਮ ਕਰੇ ਇਕ ਜਨਮ ਜੁ ਜੀਵ ਮਹਾਨਯੈ॥
ਅਨਿਕ ਜਨਮ ਤਿਸਕਾ ਫਲੁ ਭੋਗੈ ਜਾਨਯੈ॥

18. *Udasi Bodh*, f. 143^a :

ਮਾਯਾ ਕੀ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਪਰਹਰੇ॥
ਮਾਯਾ ਤਜ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਉ ਮੁਹੁ ਕਰੇ॥
ਮਾਯਾ ਮੋਹੁ ਕਾਲ ਕੀ ਫਾਸੀ॥
ਜਗ ਮਮਤਾ ਸਿਉ ਫਿਰੈ ਚੁਰਾਸੀ॥
ਪ੍ਰਤ੍ਨਿ ਮੋਹੁ ਨਰਕ ਮੈ ਡਾਰੈ॥
ਘਰ ਬਨਿਤਾ ਮੁਹੁ ਪਾਪ ਸੁ ਸਾਰੇ॥

19. *Ibid.*, f. 186^a :

ਤੀਨ ਪਦਾਰਥ ਕੋ ਤਜੈ ਰਹੈ ਰਾਮ ਸਿਉ ਲਾਗ॥
ਸੰਤ ਰੇਣ ਇਉ ਕਹਿਤ ਹੈ ਇਸ ਕਾ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਰਾਗ॥
ਤੀਨ ਪਦਾਰਥ ਜਾਨ ਇਹ ਧਰਮ ਅਰਥ ਅਰੁ ਕਾਮ॥
ਇਨ ਤੀਨੋਂ ਕੋ ਤਯਾਗ ਕਰਿ ਲਖੇ ਆਤਮਾ ਰਾਮ॥੬੪॥

20. *Udasi Bodh*, f. 200^b :

ਭਗਵਤਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਜੋ ਹੈ ਜਗ ਮਾਹਿ ਮਹਾਨ ਰੇ॥
ਦੇਹਿ ਗੋਹਿ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਉਦਾਸ ਸੁ ਜਾਨ ਰੇ॥
ਰਹੈ ਅਤਿਥ ਸਮਾਨ ਸੁ ਘਰਿ ਮੈਂ ਜਾਨਯੈ॥
ਸਗਲ ਸਮਗਰੀ ਘਰਿ ਮੈਂ ਜੋਤੀ ਆਹਿ ਰੇ॥
ਭਗਵਤਿ ਕੀ ਸਭ ਜਾਨੈ ਆਪਨੀ ਨਾਹਿ ਰੇ॥
ਜਿਉ ਜਲ ਮਾਹੀ ਕਵਲ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਰਲੇਪ ਰੇ॥
ਹੋ ਤੈਸੇ ਜਗ ਮੈ ਰਹ ਕਰਿ ਰਹੈ ਅਲੇਪ ਰੇ॥

21. *Ibid.*, ff. 5^a, 8^b :

ਸੰਤ ਸੰਗ ਤੇ ਉਪਜੈ ਭਗਤੇ॥
ਭਗਤ ਪ੍ਰਤਾਪ ਸੁ ਹੋਏ ਬਿਰਕਤੇ॥

*Brahm.*²² They also advocated the idea of service (*sewa*), and denounced the detractors of *Sadhuis* and *sants*.²³

The *Udasis* inculcated deep reverence for the 'Guru' who was virtually God.²⁴ They preached not to disobey the Guru's order (*agya*).²⁵ The detractors of the Guru (*guru-nindak*) were severely criticized by the *Udasis*.²⁶ It is possible to make a clear distinction between the Guru and the God.²⁷ Every 'Sikh' (disciple) was capable of being raised to the status of the guru.²⁸

22. *Ibid.*, f. 9^a :

ਭਗਵਤਿ ਰੂਪ ਸੰਤ ਸਭ ਹਯੈ॥
ਸੰਤਨ ਸੰਗ ਪਰਮ ਪਦ ਲਹਯੈ॥
ਨਿਰਗੁਣ ਰੂਪ ਸੰਤ ਸਭ ਜਾਨੈ॥
ਇਸ ਮੈ ਭੇਦ ਨ ਰੰਚਕਿ ਮਾਨੈ॥

23. *Ibid.*, ff. 9^a, 77^b and 78^b :

ਸਲੋਕ॥ ਸੇਵਾ ਸੰਤਨਿ ਕੀ ਕਰੈ ਕਿਰਤਿ ਕਮਾਇ ਜੁ ਖਾਇ॥
ਘਰ ਬੈਠੇ ਕੋ ਹਰਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਤਿਸਕੋ ਆਪ ਸੁ ਆਇ॥
ਕਬੀਰ ਸੇਵਾ ਕੇ ਦੋ ਭਲੇ ਏਕ ਸੰਤ ਏਕ ਰਾਮ॥
ਰਾਮ ਸੁ ਦਾਤਾ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕਾ ਸੰਤ ਜਪਾਵੈ ਨਾਮ॥
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ਸੰਤ ਨ ਹੋਤੇ ਜਗਤਿ ਮੇ ਜਲ ਮਰਤਾ ਸੰਸਾਰ॥੫੬॥

24. *Udasi Bodh*, f. 10^a :

ਗੁਰ ਸਮ ਔਰ ਨ ਦੇਵ ਕੋ ਪਰਮ ਦੇਵ ਗੁਰ ਦੇਵ॥
ਸੰਤ ਰੇਣ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਕੀ ਮਨ ਲਾਇ ਕਰੀਐ ਸੇਵ॥੫੨॥

25. *Ibid.*, f. 304^{ab} :

ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਆਗਯਾ ਜੋਇ ਫਿਰਾਇ॥
ਚਮਗਿਦੜ ਕਾ ਜਨਮ ਸੁ ਪਾਇ॥੩੮॥

26. *Ibid.*, f. 68^b :

ਨਿਜ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਜੋ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਕਰੈ॥
ਸੋ ਨਰ ਜਾਇ ਨਰਕ ਮੇ ਪਰੈ॥

27. *Ibid.*, f. 231^a :

ਗੁਰ ਸਮ ਅਵਰੁ ਦਿਆਲ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥
ਲੋਕ ਬੇਦ ਇਮ ਭਾਖੈ ਦੋਇ॥
ਗੁਰਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ ਪੂਰਨ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ॥
ਯਾਹਿ ਵਿਖੈ ਕਛੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਭਰਮ॥੫੦॥

28. *Udasi Bodh*, f. 231^b :

ਗੁਰ ਸਿਖ ਕੋ ਅਪਨੇ ਸਮ ਕਰੈ॥
ਨਿਜ ਪਰਤਾਪ ਸੁ ਸਿਖ ਉਰ ਭਰੈ॥

The *Udasis* emphasized the importance of the Word (*sabad*) without which the realization of *Brahm* was impossible.²⁹ They believed both in the *nirguna* and *sarguna* of the Word.³⁰ Significantly, they also equated the word with *Brahm*.³¹

The *Udasis* believed in charity (*dan* or *pun*) as an antidote to *pap*. They advocated particularly the cause of Brahmans, the '*sants*' and the poor and needy people.³² Sant Rein advocates that the Brahmans should be deemed fit for charity, for they processed knowledge of the *Vedas* and followed disciplined life.³³ The articles of charity included oil, corn, clothes, silken bed, cows, horses, bull-cart, diamonds, pearls, gold and silver.³⁴ They believed that Guru Nanak also favoured the idea of charity as a way to

29. *Udasi Bodh*, f. 233^b :

ਦੇਹਰਾ॥ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਉਠੈ ਸੋ ਸਬਦਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਪਰੈ ਤਹਿ ਕਾਨ॥
ਸੰਤ ਰੇਣ ਤਿਉ ਸਬਦਿ ਕਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤਿ ਹੈ ਭਗਵਾਨ॥੨੭॥

30. *Ibid.*, ff. 232^b and 233^a :

ਦੁਇ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਕੇ ਨਿਰਗੁਣਿ ਸਰਗੁਣਿ ਜਾਨ॥

31. *Ibid.*, ff. 229^a and 232^b :

ਸਬਦਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕਾ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਹਮ ਤੋ ਭਾਖੈ ਰੋਜ॥
ਸੰਤ ਰੇਣ ਗੁਰ-ਸਬਦਿ ਕਾ ਕਰੋ ਭਲੀ ਬਿਧ ਖੋਜ॥
ਸਲੋਕ॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਸਬਦਿ ਤੇ ਪਰੇ ਹੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕੇ ਮਾਹਿ॥
ਸੰਤ ਰੇਣ ਇਸ ਸਮਝਿ ਕੋ ਪਾਇ ਸਕੇ ਕੂਊ ਨਾਹਿ॥

32. *Udasi Bodh*, ff. 81^b, 82^a and 82^b :

ਅਸਿ ਰਸਤੇ ਤਿਨ ਜਮ ਲੇ ਜਾਵਹਿ॥
ਕਰਿਯੋ ਪੁੰਨਯ ਤਹਾ ਸੋ ਪਾਵਹਿ॥

33. *Udasi Bodh*, f. 83^b :

ਚੋਪਈ॥ ਬੇਦ ਅਭਿਆਸੇ ਬੇਦ ਆਚਾਰ॥ ਰਹਿਣੀ ਕਹਿਣੀ ਬੇਦ ਆਧਾਰ॥

34. *Udasi Bodh*, ff. 80^{ab} and 81^a :

ਕੀਉ ਤੇਲਿ ਜਿਨਿ ਪੁੰਨਯ ਪਰਾਨੀ॥
ਤਹਾ ਕਾਮ ਸੋ ਆਯ ਬਿਨਾਨੀ॥
ਸੰਤ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਕੇ ਅਸਥਾਨ॥
ਅਥਵਾ ਦੇਵ ਦੁਆਰੇ ਜਾਨ॥
ਦੀਪਕ ਲਾਇ ਜਾਹਿ ਪਰਾਨੀ॥
ਤਹਾ ਕਾਮ ਸੋ ਆਯ ਬਿਨਾਨੀ॥
ਮਹਾ ਸੋ ਘੋਰ ਅੰਧੇਰ ਜਹਾ॥
ਤਿਨ ਕਾ ਹੋਇ ਚਾਨਣਾ ਤਹਾ॥

salvation.³⁵ The *Udasīs* also practiced begging, and therefore, favoured the cause of the beggars.³⁶

The *Udasīs* acknowledged all the three methods of attaining to salvation, i.e. *karma* (the path of action), *bhakti* (the path of loving devotion) and *Janan* (the path of knowledge). The object of *bhakti* for the *Udasīs* was the 'Supreme Reality'. They believed that without 'love' and *bhakti* of *Brahm*, *bhakti* was not possible and without *bhakti* knowledge of God (*gyan*) and salvation (*mukti*) was impossible.³⁷ It was in this context that the *Udasīs* emphasized the importance of *bhakti*.³⁸

The path of the *Udasīs* was open to all, irrespective of their castes.³⁹ The combination of *bhakti* and *gyan* was perhaps a peculiar idea of the *Udasīs*.⁴⁰ This, however, did not minimize the importance of the Guru.⁴¹ In

35. *Ibid.*, f. 177^a :

ਭਵ ਤਰਨੇ ਕਾ ਏਹ ਉਪਾਵੰ ਜਾਨਿਐ॥
ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਇਹੁ ਭਾਖਿਉ ਆਪ ਮਹਾਨਿਐ॥
ਦੀਨ ਗਰੀਬਨ ਕੋ ਹਥ ਤੇ ਕਛੁ ਦੀਜਿਐ॥
ਸੰਤ ਰੇਣ ਇਹ ਜਨਮ ਸਫਲ ਕਰਿ ਲੀਜਿਐ॥

36. *Udasi Bodh*, f. 73^a :

ਅਭਿਆਗਤਿ ਆਵੈ ਜੋ ਦੁਆਰੇ॥
ਤਿਸ ਕੋ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਦਏ ਉਦਾਰੇ॥
ਤਾਹਿ ਦਏ ਬਿਨ ਅੰਨ ਜੁ ਖਾਈ॥
ਮਾਸ ਬਰਾਬਰਿ ਅੰਨ ਸੁ ਭਾਈ॥

37. *Ibid.*, ff. 127^b, 128^a and 94^a :

ਭਾਵ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਿਨ ਕੇ ਉਰ ਮੈ ਤਿਨ ਕੋ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਮਿਲੇ ਕਹੁ ਕੈਸੇ॥
ਭਾਵ ਅਹੇ ਜਿਨ ਕੇ ਉਰ ਮੈ ਤਿਨ ਕੋ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਮਿਲੈ ਬਿਨ ਪੈਸੇ॥

38. *Udasi Bodh*, ff. 4^b, 5^a :

ਭਗਵਤਿ ਭਗਤੀ ਬਿਨ ਦੁਖ ਪਾਵਹਿ॥
ਜਨਮੇ ਮਰੈ ਸੁ ਬਾਰਮਬਾਰੇ॥

39. *Udasi Bodh*, f. 203^a :

ਕਿਸੀ ਬਰਣ ਮੈ ਭਗਤਿ ਸੁ ਹੋਇ॥
ਪਰਮ ਸਰੋਸਟਿ ਜਾਨੈ ਸੋਇ॥

40. *Ibid.*, ff. 11^a and 313^b :

ਗਯਾਨ ਪੰਥ ਅਬ ਕਹਿਤ ਹੋ ਸੁਨੇ ਸੰਤ ਮਨ ਲਾਇ॥
ਜਿਸ ਕੋ ਪੜਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਸਮਝਿ ਕਰਿ ਜੀਵ ਪਰਮ ਪਦ ਪਾਇ॥

41. *Ibid.*, f. 230^b :

ਗਯਾਨ ਸੋ ਆਹਿ ਦੋਇ ਪਰਕਾਰ॥
ਇਕ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਇਕ ਬੇਦ ਨੁਸਾਰ॥
ਬੇਦ ਨੁਸਾਰ ਗਯਾਨ ਹੈ ਜੋਇ॥
ਬੇਦ ਪੜੇ ਸੋ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤਿ ਹੋਇ॥੪੫॥
ਅਨੁਭਵ ਗਯਾਨ ਆਹਿ ਜੋ ਆਪਤਿ॥
ਗੁਰ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਤੇ ਹੋਇ ਸੁ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤਿ॥

fact, the Guru got precedence over the *Vedas*.⁴² Once acquired, *gyan* was never lost.⁴³ The grace of the Guru, more perhaps than the grace of God, was important in attaining to *gyan*.⁴⁴

All this shows the *Udasis* compromise with both Hindu and Sikh religious systems of thought. Their ideas and beliefs are very largely based on the Hindu and Sikh scriptures. Hence, they appeared to be more close to the Hindu thought, particularly the Vedantic School of Philosophy, although their recognition of the fundamental ideas of Sikh thought propounded by Guru Nanak can not be denied or ignored altogether.

42. *Udasi Bodh*, f. 231^b :

ਉਤਮ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਗਿਆਨ ਮੱਧਯਮ ਬੇਦਕਾ।

43. *Ibid.*, ff. 87^b and 88^a :

ਗਿਆਨ ਕਲਾ ਕਾ ਨਾਸ ਨ ਹੋਇ॥

ਸੰਤ ਬੇਦ ਇਸੁ ਭਾਖੈ ਦੋਇ॥

44. *Ibid.*, ff. 87^b, 88^a and 230^b :

ਹੈ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨ ਜਿਸ ਪਰ ਭਗਵਾਨ॥

ਤਿਸ ਕੋ ਦੇਵੇ ਅਪਨਾ ਗਿਆਨ॥

ਗਿਆਨ ਭਯੋ ਭਗਵਤਿ ਕਾ ਜਾਹਿ॥

ਭਯੋ ਸੁ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਜਗਤਿ ਕੇ ਮਾਹਿ॥੪੮॥

PARCHIAN SEWA DAS : REFLECTIONS ON PONTIFICATE AND MARTYRDOM OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR

*Kavita Rani**

The pontificate and martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur has been a subject of heated discussion among writers and historians. The study in hand critically delves on this subject from historical point of view bringing into focus the contents of *Parchian* of Sewa Das Udasi, a manuscript of note among the Sikh theological writings.

The ambiguity of the last words 'Baba Bakala' of Guru Harkrishan, the eighth Guru of the Sikhs led to the question as to who should be the spiritual guide of the Sikhs after him. The greedy relatives took advantage of the situation and flocked to the village Bakala for claiming guruship. As per popular Sikh tradition twenty two *manjis* were set up at Baba Bakala.¹ Historians differ with regard to the number of *manjis* set up at Baba Bakala by the Sodhis. They mostly agree that the number twenty two appears to have been very popular on account of this number set up already by Guru Amar Das and the Mughal provinces of the reign of Emperor Akbar, the great Mughal. According to a popular Sikh tradition, the Sikh *sangat* made a thorough search of the Guru at village Baba Bakala. Dr. Ganda Singh simply refers to the established old Sikh tradition when he points out that 'led by Makhan Shah of the Labana tribe, who was a trader by profession

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1. Historians mostly agree that Guru Amar Das during his pontificate had established twenty two *manjis* or preaching centres of Sikh religion in far off places to preach Sikhism. For details see G.S. Nayyar, 'Significance of the Pontificate of Guru Amar Das' in *The Panjab Past and Present*, October, 1992, pp. 17-19. Though no contemporary source on the setting up of twenty two *manjis* by Guru Amar Das is available yet a strong popular tradition can hardly be ignored if nothing is found against it.

and was acting as a *masand* in Gujrat (Kathiavar), they sought out Tegh Bahadur and proclaimed him the real Guru'.²

Sewa Das Udasi, the author of *Parchian* has a different rather a novel and minced statement to give. This information is very valuable in so far as the possibilities of how the search for the Guru took its turn. He points out how sixteen *manjis* were set up at Baba Bakala by the Sodhis.³ Each and everyone stressed his claim to be the Guru of the Sikhs after Guru Harkrishan. It is to be pointed here that Sodhi Dhir Mal figured among self made Gurus. Though Guru Tegh Bahadur himself was present at Baba Bakala at that time yet he remained quite hidden from the *sangat* having been lost in meditation. But it does not imply that no body from the Sikh *sangat* over there knew him. Anyhow, devoted Sikhs having no reliance on the claimants of Guruship resolved to obtain the verdict of the *Adi Granth* after praying to God, the Almighty for His help in search of the Guru. This should be taken to mean that Sikhs have unlimited faith on their holy scripture. Since the first word taken up from the *Adi Granth* was 'Tegh', the *sangat* consulted Mata Nanaki, the mother of Guru Tegh Bahadur to throw some light on the said word 'Tegh' and requested her if there was any such name available in the family of the Sodhis. Although it has been a praxis with the Sikhs to consult the *Adi Granth* and pay reverence to the opening word of the *Granth* but here it is only a version presented by the author of *Parchian*. It might be a hypothesis. Moreover, the author of *Parchian* has simply added another probable version to the theory of pontificate of Guru Tegh Bahadur and has not given a last word which must be taken into account by us. Here our purpose is only to examine the given version. Mata Nanaki remarked, "Tegha is my son but he always remains lost in meditation. He casually takes his meals. He does not bother about his clothing and other things. He is introvert and does not mix himself with others. They have never heard any indecent word from his lips". The *sangat* felt very much impressed to hear about a man who had no craving in life and was an apostle of peace and patience. In fact, the curiosity of the *sangat* had no

2. Teja Singh Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1989, p. 49. Henceforth, *A Short History of the Sikhs*.
3. Sewa Das Udasi, *Parchian Sewa Das*, Languages Department, Punjab, Patiala, 1960, pp.82-95.

limit when they listened to the activity of an unworldly man. To be lost in meditation was considered a supreme symptom of a prophet.⁴

The *sangat* along with Mata Nanaki approached her son who was in deep meditation in a corner of a dark small room. He was fully involved in meditation. The *sangat* requested the Guru that his concealment had resulted in all-round darkness for the Sikhs. So he should immediately come before the *sangat* and enlighten them with his gracious presence. The significance of the *sangat* in Sikh history is a fact well known. Guru Arjan described *sangat* (*Asa Mahalla* V. 385) as an orchard. . . . bearing the fruit of the Name. Bhai Gurdas states the Guru is intermixed with *sangat* (*var* 29, *pauri* 19). Then Mata Nanaki is said to have remarked that Guru Harkrishan had left the *sangat* entirely under his responsibility. So it was his moral duty to sit on the *manji* and guide the Sikhs.⁵

Guru Tegh Bahadur remarked that the responsibility was extremely heavy ('ਪੈਟ ਗੋਰੀ ਹੈ') and he was not capable of undertaking it. Then the *sangat* appealed to him to accept their request solely because of the fact that it was the will and directive of Guru Harkrishan. Moreover, he had been nominated as the Guru of the Sikhs by the holy *Adi Granth* and he should not hide himself, and appear before the congregation. All this meant that God ordained it. In other words Guru Harkrishan himself found him hidden and the *sangat* had no power to find him out. So in this way the *sangat* pressed Guru Tegh Bahadur hard to sit on the *manji* and remove their doubts.⁶

Guru Tegh Bahadur became kind enough to accept the heart-felt desire of the *sangat*. He took his bath, wore new clothes, sat on the *manji* and delighted the Sikhs. The narrator of *Parchian* explains at this stage how Makhan Shah, a Labana Sikh, who was a *masand*, came to the presence of the Guru. According to a popular Sikh tradition, he was sailing with his commercial goods when he faced a problem of the ship-wreck. He prayed before the occupant of the *gaddi* of Guru Nanak and wished that he would offer one thousand *mohars* by visiting him personally if his ship was saved from the said storm.⁷

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

He had been roaming here and there in search of the Guru with the desired sum of money. On reaching Baba Bakala he found a number of Sodhis pretending to be the Guru seated on the *gaddi* of Guru Nanak. He offered two *mohars* to each and every one who was sitting on the *manji* with an idea that the real Guru himself would demand the sum he had desired to offer. He went to the pretending Gurus turn by turn but when the turn of Guru Tegh Bahadur came, the latter quoted that he was to offer him one thousand *mohars* instead of the two.⁸ Makhan Shah was highly delighted and prostrated before the Guru. Makhan Shah climbed up at the top of the roof and declared by the beat of the drum that he had found the *Guru* — '*Guru Ladha, Guru Ladha*'. On this it is said that all the *manji* holders disappeared.⁹

In this way the narrator of *Parchian* while sticking to the old established Sikh tradition gives a new version pertaining to the pontificate of Guru Tegh Bahadur.¹⁰ This new version seems to be very valid and valuable for those interested in research of the circumstance in which Guru Tegh Bahadur occupied the *gaddi* of Guru Nanak. It implies that Guru Tegh Bahadur was already identified before Makhan Shah Labana happened to locate him.

Whereas the version given by the author of *Parchian* seems to be a greater possibility, his narration regarding the Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur does not appear to be logical one. Present research proves beyond doubt the circumstances in which Guru Tegh Bahadur wanted to sacrifice his life. Guru Gobind Singh's writing in *Bachittar Natak* throws useful hints regarding the mission and Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur.¹¹

Sewa Das Udasi in his *Parchian* (ninth Guru *Sakhi* 4) like some other theological writers state that once Guru Tegh Bahadur went away pretending to go for hunting but he proceeded to some far off places. He reached Agra in the company of three Sikhs on horse backs. He stayed in a garden where a shepherd was grazing his sheep and goats. He asked the shepherd to pawn the *shawl* of the former and a gold *mohar* with some confectioner and bring some sweets worth rupees two only. The Sikhs would look after his goats. The confectioner thought that the buyer must be a thief. The *Daroga* of Emperor Aurangzeb had happened to be in the area.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

11. Guru Gobind Singh, *Bachittar Natak*, V-13-6 and VI-42-43.

The *Daroga* was informed about this incident. The shepherd narrated the whole event. The *Daroga* sent for the Guru and his Sikhs. The Guru along with his Sikhs went to the *Daroga* and met him. He told his identity that he is Guru Tegh Bahadur. The *Daroga* informed the Emperor that the Guru of the Hindus whom they called *Sacha Patshah* happened to be in his custody along with three other horsemen. The Emperor ordered their arrest. Resultantly, all the four were put in chains. The two Sikhs managed to leave the Guru but one remained with him. It is stated that the Emperor was under the impression that Hindus in large number would adopt Islam in case their Guru embraced it. However, the Guru was given many allurements in case he embraced Islam. Harsh and hard means were put to use and threats were given but to no effect on the Guru.¹²

Sewa Das Udasi points out at this juncture that a Sikh of the Guru came to him with the suggestion that he would avenge the rude and crude behaviour of the Emperor with the Guru. The Guru advised him that he would abide by what is ordained by God Himself. The narrator of this account quotes a couplet composed by Guru Tegh Bahadur who sent it to his son at Anandpur :

My strength is exhausted. I am in chains and have no means left. Now God alone is my refuge. He will give me redemption (salvage) as he did the elephant (in the classic tell-tale). My associates have all deserted me; no one has subsisted with me to the last. God alone is my refuge.¹³

The reply received from his son was heartening :

Strength is there; your fetters are loose. Every recourse is at hand. Nanak everything is within your capacity. It is only you who can help it.¹⁴

Some historians hold that the first *saloka* was composed by Guru Tegh Bahadur himself and the second by Guru Gobind Singh. Both couplets are inserted in the *Adi Granth*.¹⁵ Some historians like Dr. Ganda Singh go to the extent of saying that the second one is the only couplet of Guru Gobind Singh in the holy *Granth*.¹⁶ However, the authenticity of this

12. Sewa Das Udasi, *op.cit.*

13. *Salokas* by Guru Tegh Bahadur in *Adi Granth*, p. 1429.

14. *Ibid.*, cf. Sewa Das Udasi, *op.cit.*

15. *Adi Granth*, p. 1429.

16. *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p.55.

statement has not yet been established. It also looks odd and kooky to imagine that there is only one couplet of the tenth Guru in the *Adi Granth*.

Sewa Das Udasi makes a very doubtful rather unbelievable statement that Guru Tegh Bahadur himself ordered a Sikh for his execution when he was in Mughal custody. This statement has no basis and the objective of the narrator is also not very clear in dealing with such concoction. Sewa Das Udasi narrates that on the bidding of Guru Gobind Singh himself the dead body of the Guru was brought to Anandpur by *Ranghreta* Sikhs in a bullock cart where Guru Gobind Singh was present at that time. The head of the Guru was, however, cremated in Delhi by the Sikhs¹⁷ quite in concealment from the Mughal authorities. The author of *Parchian*, quite contrary to the Sikh tradition holds that the dead body of the Guru was brought by *Ranghretas* by the order of Guru Gobind Singh himself.¹⁸ However, the tradition holds that a *Ranghreta* Sikh named Jaita had volunteered himself for this purpose and was not asked by the tenth Guru. He carried away the head of the Guru to Anandpur and presented it to (Guru) Gobind Singh who remarked : '*Ranghrete Guru ke bete*' (*Ranghretas* are the sons of the Guru). Tradition further holds that a Labana Sikh along with a few associates slipped away with the headless body of the Guru in a cart to his hut in Delhi and cremated it by burning all his goods of domestic use so that nobody could suspect his action.

Parchian of Sewa Das Udasi, however concentrates on some specific points which may be delineated here in a few lines. Guru Tegh Bahadur himself went to Agra and arranged for his arrest. This is really a unique act of the Guru on account of the fact that it is an extraordinary act to volunteer for arrest, torture and execution. The Guru did it when he knew it very well that the Mughal Emperor was following a very harsh and hard policy towards the non-Muslims. Even during the custody of the Mughals, the Guru depicted a remarkable patience which shows the heights of his moral courage. The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur is an act of fearlessness and is indicative that the life of disrespect and slavery is worst. This Martyrdom gave an

17. Sewa Das Udasi, *op.cit.*

18. Sewa Das Udasi, *op.cit.*; cf. Kahan Singh Nabha, *Gurshabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh*, Patiala, 1974, p. 600 re-appraises the old and established Sikh tradition that 'the name of the place of Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur is '*Sisganj*' which is situated in the *Chandni Chowk*, Delhi and the place where his dead body was cremated is called '*Rakabganj*'.

initiative to innocent and the ignorant people to fight for freedom which is their birth right. Moreover, it is stated that one *Maulvi* and a Sikh offered to show a miracle to avenge the cruelty of the Emperor which path the Guru rejected. The idea is that to show a miracle is sinful and a foul play. The author of *Parchian* uses the word *peer* for Guru Tegh Bahadur. As a matter of fact, the Hindus considered Guru Tegh Bahadur as their prophet. Macauliffe agrees with the Sikh chronicles that the reason for the arrest of Guru Tegh Bahadur was the taking over of the cause of the *Kashmiri Pandits* who were being persecuted by the Mughal Governor of Kashmir.¹⁹ This argument is supported by Guru Gobind Singh's words in the *Bachittar Natak* :

*Tilak janju rakha prabh taka
kino bado kalu me saka.*²⁰

Leaving aside the information provided by the author of *Parchian* on various issues relating to Guru Tegh Bahadur we gather from the other sources that Guru Tegh Bahadur during his last holy trip which lasted for two years moved with a large following the number of which went on changing from place to place. The Sikhs paid homage to him with lot of offerings. These events were taken by the Mughal authority as danger to the State. The voluntary offerings were considered forcible exactions. All this resulted in the arrest of the Guru who was brought to the presence of Emperor Aurangzeb at Delhi from Agra. The Guru was offered the choice of either embracing Islam or death. The Guru preferred death. The Guru also refused to perform any miracle to pacify the tyrants.

Guru Tegh Bahadur was executed on 11th November, 1675 in *Chandni Chowk*, Delhi where Sardar Baghel Singh of Karorsinghia Misl got constructed a holy shrine in 1790. Guru Gobind Singh in the *Bachittar Natak* has applauded this event as already stated above.

19. . Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion : Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors*, IV, p. 371.

20. *Bachittar Natak*, VI, pp. 42-43.

HER HIGHNESS BEGAM SAMRU : AN OROTUND REGINA OF SARDHANA

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A simple dancing bonnilass troupe arose from the position of obscurity and poverty to the status of a princess of Sardhana estate near Meerut. Her father's name was Lutf Ali Khan who had settled at Kutana (Kotana), a village in Bagpat tehsil near the region of Meerut. The Begam was born at Kutana¹ in around A.D. 1750.² Her nickname was "Farza"³ (later called 'Farzana') who came along with her mother to Delhi in about the year of 1760.⁴ Lt. Col. Sleeman wrote : 'she was by birth a Sayyidani, or lineal descendant from Muommad'⁵ but other writers mention her as 'Kashmiri dancing girl or a Kashmiran but by family Georgian'⁶ and also a daughter of

*Pinjore (Haryana).

1. H.G. Keene, *Hindustan Under Free Lances, 1770-1820*, London, 1907, p. 76; Her mother's name was Jaddan. Jaipal Singh, *Samru the Fearless Warrior*, New Delhi, 2004, p.3.
2. Thomas William Beale, *An Oriental Biographical Dictionary* (Revised by H.G. Keene), Reprinted Delhi, 1971, p. 373; But Mr. Newill and Mr. Atkinson wrote Farzana's birth in 1753. H.R. Newill, *Meerut, A Gazetteer*, Vol. IV of Series, Allahabad, 1904, p. 157; Edmint T. Atkinson, *Statistical Description and Historical Account North-Western of the provinces of India*, Vol. II, Meerut Division, Part-I, Allahabad, 1875, p. 95.
3. G.M.D. Sufi, *Kashir : A History of Kashmir*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1974, p. 391; Gulbadan Jaan called her Farzo. Jaipal Singh, *op.cit.*, p.4.
4. E.T. Atkinson, *op.cit.*, p.96.
5. Lt. Col. W.H. Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollections of An Indian Official*, Vol. II, London, 1844, p. 378; 'Farzana' had noble blood, and her father died when she was a child of 14 years, then her mother moved to Delhi. Tanushree Podder, 'Church that Begum Samru built', *The Tribune*, Sunday, November 11, 2007, Chandigarh; H.S. Bhatia (Ed.), *Military History of British India (1607-1947)*, New Delhi, 1977, p. 136.
6. Lt. Thomas Bacon, *First Impressions and the Studies from Nature in Hindustan*, Vol. II, London, 1837, p. 35; John J. Pool, *Woman's Influence in the East*, Published 1892, p. 221; Edward Thompson, *The Making of the Indian Princes*, London, 1943, p. 76; J. Baillie Fraser, Esq. *Military Memoirs of Lt. Col. James Skinner*, CB Mussoorie, 1955, p. 285 of Part I. (Hereafter cited as MM).

Mughal nobleman.⁷

In Delhi, Farzana spent her early life in the 'Kotha' (where the *Mujras* and dances are held) of a head dancer (*Baiji*) named Gulbadan Jaan. She had a attractive glow in her eyes and active charmed personality. In the meantime, Walter Reinhardt [later General Samru (1720-1778)], a German military adventurer, after deserting the services of many chiefs in India, joined the army of Jat Raja in Bharatpur.⁸ Very soon, he took the charge of

7. William Francklin, *The History of the reign of Shah Aulum*, reprinted Allahabad, 1915, p. 146; Thomas Twining, *Travels in India - A Hundred Years Ago* (Ed. The Rev. William H.G. Twining), London, 1893, p. 262.

8. N.D. Ahuja, "German Nawab of Haryana", *The Sunday Tribune*, May 31, 1981.

In brief, the struggling life of Walter Reinhardt (1720-1778) as : He was better known by the different subriquets i.e. Sombre, Sumro, Somroo, Sumru, Samru, Somru, Sumroo, Sambre and Summer. He was born (at Saltzburg in Germany) of obscure parents in the electorate of Traves. He came from Luxemburg to India in 1750. In India, he not only served many chiefs but also deserted their services regularly from time to time shortly. His services rendered to the various chiefs as follows : Initially in French service; In the British service with a rank of Sergeant; again in French army at Chandernagar (here took his nickname 'Somru' or 'Samru'); again joined the British service in a Swiss Corps in Calcutta (1760); After 18 days he left the British service and rejoined the French service; then in the service of Nawab Safdar Jang of Oudh; again quitted and joined the service of Father Gregory, an Armenian, in favour of Qasim Ali Khan (Mir Qasim) in 1763; In November 1763 deserting the Qasim's army he joined the army of Shuja-ud-daulah, Nawab Wazir of Bengal, then in Lucknow; then quit and served many native chiefs, like the Raja (Jawahir Singh of Bharatpur) (here he became the Commander and formed his own corps, who later became General of his army), Nawal Singh Jat, Raja of Jaipur and again in the service of some Jat Rajas; then he joined the service of Mirza Najaf Khan, a General and 'Grand Wazir' of Emperor Shah Alam-II. Later on, he became greatest terror to many chiefs of Northern Western India and had fought number of Battles during his services of many chiefs. But, in the disturbed period of that time, the desertion was as ill-o'mened to him during the services of many chiefs due to many compelling circumstances. After sometime, he again joined the service of Jat Raja of Bharatpur. But very soon, he again rejoined the service of Shah Alam-II (1775). But due to some reasons, he again joined the Jat's service at Bharatpur. Later on, his last service remain in the army of King, Shah Alam-II (1776-1777). See also : Kalika Ranjan Qanungo, *History of the Jats*, reprint, New Delhi, 2003; Hukam Singh, *History of the Jats*, 2 Vols., Rohtak, Ynm; *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XXII (Published Henry Frowde, MA), Oxford, 1908 (hereafter cited as *IGI*), pp. 105-106; Walter Hamilton, *The East-India Gazetteer*, Vol. II, 1st Published 1828 & Reprint Delhi, 1984, p. 514; see also *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol. V, 1776-80, Calcutta, 1930 (hereafter cited as *CPC*); H.A. Compton, *A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindustan, 1784-1803*, London, 1893; C. Grey, *European Adventurers of Northern India, 1785 to 1849*, Ed. by H.L.O. Garrett, Reprint Patiala, 1970; N.D. Ahuja, "German Nawab of Haryana", *op.cit.*; Rattan Amol Singh Sidhu, *The Begam of Sardhana and Her Associates*, Pinjore, 2003; H.S. Bhatia, *Military History*, pp. 134-136.

the Jat army and had also took an active part against the rebels of the Jats near the territories of Delhi. Afterwards, Gen. Samru to whom the British called him the butcher of Patna (where he murdered about 150 British prisoners-of-war and Civilians in October 1763 and had decamped with the treasure of Mir Qasim) came to Delhi.⁹ During his service under Mirza Najaf Khan¹⁰, he also saved the throne of King Shah Alam-II from the rebels in 1774, and for his services, he got a jagir at Sardhana region in

9. Seid - Gholam - Hossein Khan, *The Sier Mutaqharin or History of India*, Vol. II, Translated Calcutta, p. 505; K.K. Datta, *Shah Alam-II and The East India Company*, (Calcutta 1965), p. 29; *CPC*, Vol. V, 1776-80, No. 258, Aug. 29, 1776, p. 33; *MM*, pp. 281-282 of Part I. He plundered the territories of Mir Qasim, the Nawab of Bengal, during his service and had escaped from his territories due to the fear of his capture by the Nawab's forces. Regarding the looting money, in *MM*, it is mentioned that 'It is asserted that much of this plunder remained in Sumroo's hands, and was the means by which he was enabled to hold his troops together, and the foundation of his future success'. *Ibid.* p. 282. But, it seems that he plundered the wealth during the service of the Nawab of Bengal, Mir Qasim, who had failed to pay the dues of Walter Reinhardt. Jaipal Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 54.
10. Nawab Mirza Najaf Khan (1737-1782) was a Persian, who belonged to the royal family of the Safauids in Iran. He came to India during the very middle of 18th century. In India, he served the various chiefs like Muhammed Quli Khan of Allahabad; Mir Qasim of Bengal; the British service; services of some Jat Rajas and lastly the service of Emperor Shah Alam-II of Delhi where he became a Grand-Wazir of the King. During his services with many chiefs, he fought number of battles like at Barsona, Deeg and Ghausgarh etc. and had become victorious in many battles. In 1782, he was at the height of his power and had commanding more than 60,000 troops (consisted of the rocket-men and disciplined sepoys). For his excellent services and bravery, he got Najafgarh region near Delhi and the King, Shah Alam-II, also conferred the title on him as : 'Khan Sipah-i-Salar Hindustan, Rustam-ud-daulah, Rustam-i-Hind, Zulfiqar-ud-daulah, Mirza Najaf Khan Bahadur, Ghalib Jang; or Commander-in-Chief in Hindustan, The Rustum of the state, the Rustum of India, Splendour of the State, Prince Najaf Khan, Victorious in Battle'. He passed away due to some disease on April, 1782. He had no male heir but his daughter was married to Muhammad Beg Khan Hamadani, a governor of Agra. So, he, as Middle East adventurer, was an able statesman, brave, powerful and bold leader. Percival Spear, *A History of Delhi under the Later Mughals*, reprint Delhi, 2003; K.R. Qanungo, *op.cit.*; Sir Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. III, 1771-1788, Calcutta, 1952; Michael Edwardes, *King of The World, The Life and Times of Shah Alam-Emperor of Hindustan*, London, 1970; Le Nabob Rene Madec, printed by M. Barbe (in French).

Meerut District.¹¹ He also made Sardhana his headquarters and later on he made it his capital and had settled here.¹²

Moreover about General Samru's character, it is mentioned in *MM* of James Skinner : 'Sumroo appears to have been a man whose evil propensities far outweighed the good; he was stern and bloody-minded, in no degree remarkable for fidelity or devotion to his employers, and though we cannot imagine him void of those qualities which attach the soldiery to their officer, we can see little in his career to indicate anything more than the hard, unscrupulous, and reckless, though bold, military adventurer . . . one of his most marked traits is a cautious prudence, which at length amounted to a suspicious jealousy, that rendered his life entirely a burthen'.¹³ Many writers also wrote that he was a 'man of flint-like heart, an unspeakable scoundrel, grave sullen, though illiterate, merciless, cruel and blood thirsty'.¹⁴

But, inspite of his dark character and other notorious activities, he was a brave fighter, clever, a religious and also intelligent in art of warfare. He not only maintained his troops in drill and discipline but also had got many jagirs around the territories of Sardhana during his services in various chiefs

11. On that occasion, for the brilliant services, "Somru had an interview with the Emperor (Shah Alam-II) on the 9th Rabi I (20th May, 1774), received *khilat* and was appointed faujdar of Panipat and other *parganas*. *Bayan-i-Waqa* (MS. in Persian), p. 278, by Abdul Karim Kashmiri (Quoted : Kalika Ranjan Qanungo, *op.cit.*, p. 157; *CPC*, Vol. IV, 1772-5, No. 1097, June 8, 1774, p. 194. (Somru also got the revenues of the regions of Sonapat from the Emperor); *CPC*, Vol. V, 1776-80, No. 197, June 8, from Mirza Najaf Khan (Calcutta 1930), p. 22; N.D. Ahuja, "German-Nawab of Haryana". *op.cit.*; H.S. Bhatia, *European Women in India - Their Life and Adventures*, New Delhi, 1979, p. 70.
12. After settling here, he developed his territories near Sardhana. In *MM*, it is mentioned that "Nujjuff Khan Zulficar-u-Dowlut, at that time supremo at Dehlee, who, while reducing the Jhats to obedience, had probably become aware of Sumroo's value. It was he who assigned to the fortunate adventurer, the purgunnah of Sardhana in Jeydad, for the maintenance of his corps, and in the service of this nobleman Sumroo remained until he died, in the year 1778. . . . Sardhana (valued at six lakhs of rupees a year, but by the Begam's good management increased to ten), *Ibid.*, pp. 282-284.
13. *MM*, p. 284 of part I.
14. Antoine Louis Henri Polier, *Shah Alam-II and His Court*, Calcutta, 1947, p. 94; Shamsuddin, *The Loves of Begum Samroo and other True Romances*, Delhi, 1967, p. 143; Seid-Gholam-Hosseini Khan, *op.cit.* p. 505; C. Grey, *op.cit.*, p. 6.; Sir J.N. Sarkar, "Some Frenchmen in India", *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol. II, Part I, Serial No. 101, January-March, 1936, published Calcutta, p. 4; B. Banerji, "Bagam Samru", *The Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. XI, Part-I, March, 1925, Patna, p. 26; T.W. Beale, *op.cit.*, p. 373; H.G. Keene, *The Great Anarchy*, London, 1901, p. 168; Lester Hutchinson, *European Freebooters in Mughal India*, Bombay, 1964, p. 34.

of India. Moreover, he was also interested in music and mostly used to go the *Kothas* (a place or the den of prostitution and traditional dancing as well as *mujrabali* girls) in Delhi.

In one of the *Kothas* in Chauri Bazar near Jama Masjid of Delhi, he met a pretty and attractive girl, Farzana who was a dancer (also *mujrabali*) in the *Kotha* (*natch* house) of Gulbadan Baiji in about the closing year of 1774. A writer wrote: 'An ardent figher, Reinhardt was equally interested in wine, women and all the luxuries that he had become use to...' ¹⁵ Later on, Gen. Samru was 'charmed by her personal attractions, more particularly her fair complexion and lustrous eyes made her his favourite concubine and subsequently married her'. ¹⁶ Regarding the marriage of Gen. Samru with Farzana, there were many rumours that 'Whether he married her or not uncertain, but she was regarded as his wife, and succeeded at his death to his corps and his *jeedad*. . . ' ¹⁷ A letter of a British official dated 4th May 1836, mentioned that 'She was presented as a gift to Samru from Delhi by Commissioner, a Govt. officer, but she remained for life with Samru with whom she never married'. ¹⁸ But, in the eyes of the contemporary society, both Samru and Farzana became husband and wife in a legal sense. Afterwards she was called 'Begam' due to her husband who had too costumes and dressed as Nawabs. ¹⁹

15. Shamsuddin, *op.cit.*, p. 143. During the service of Bharatpur Raja, Reinhardt fell in love with Farzana (later known as Begam Samru), a young beautiful girl of Arabian extraction, trained in traditional manners, *Ibid.*, pp.144-145.
16. Lt. Thomas Bacon, *op.cit.*, p.35; In a letter, a reporter, Araplant, also mentioned on 4th May 1836 that Farzana was a *natch* girl and also Tawaif (a sort of prostitution). *F&P Consul & Proceedings*, 23rd May 1836, p.9. It is said that, in 1765, Raja Jawahir Singh of Bharatpur took her to his state for marriage but his mother objected it. Afterwards he presented her to Samru. Lt. Bacon, *op.cit.*, p.62; *The India Magazine of Her People and Culture*, Vol. 17, No.4, March/April 1997, published- Mumbai, p.74. Regarding her marriage ceremony, "Sombre called a *Kazi* and formally married Farzana according to Muslim rites. He told her that he already had another wife and a son, Zafaryab, about eight years old. He was happy to learn that she had known about this fact before, and had still agreed to live with him." Jalpal Singh, *op.cit.*, p.27.
17. *MM*, p.285 of Part I.
18. *F&P Consul & Proceedings*, 23rd May 1836, p.62; *F&P Proceedings*, 1st December 1826, p.44. D.G. Dias's letter mentioned that Samru and Farzana never completed the marriage traditions; It is, however, 'doubts that there was any formal sacrament of marriage. In other words, she remained a concubine. In the eyes of the contemporary world it was enough that Farzana became 'Samru Ki Begam'. Moreover, the stigma of concubinage had been removed after her marriage with Gen. Samru. John Lall, *Begam Samru Fading Portrait in a Gilded Frame*, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 35 36, 65, 67:
19. M.N. Sharma, *The Life and Times of Begam Samru of Sardhana*, Vibhu Publication Sahibabad, 1985, p.70.

Later on, Begam Samru, after her marriage with Gen. Samru, started to take interest, along with her husband, in the administrative and political matters of the estate, Sardhana.²⁰ Farzana was the second wife of Gen. Samru but his first Muhammeden wife, *Barri Bibi* (to whom he had a son, Louis Balthazar Reinhardt) had become serious ill before his second marriage.

20. Sardhana (Serdhanah or Seerdhuna):

In the British period, Sardhana was actually a region, geographically, comprising the three parts i.e. Tahsil (Tehsil), Estate and Town. The Tahsil is in Meerut district i.e. in United Provinces, comprising the *parganas* of Sardhana and Barnaura, and lying between 29° 1' and 29° 16' N and 77° 19' and 77° 43' E, with an area of 250 sq. miles. There are 124 villages and only one town, Sardhana, the tahsil head-quarters. Then, the Estate has area about 28 sq. miles. Its headquarters are at Sardhana town. It belongs to a family of Muswi Saiyids, who claim descent from Ali Musa Raza, the eighth Imam. Lastly, the town of Sardhana which consists head-quarters of the Tahsil of the same name in Meerut district i.e. in United provinces. It is situated in 29° 9' N and 77° 38' E on a metalled road 12 miles (about 22 Km) North West of Meerut (about 6 miles from Sardhana station of the North Western Railway).

It was an ancient historical town which was (by the tradition) founded by a Raja Sarkat, whose family ruled till their expulsion by the Musalmans. Afterwards, the place became the property of Dhusars (a tribe) and Bishnois who were later on driven out by Tagas (a tribe) in the Eighth century. In the mughal period, its name, existed after a Sadhu's name i.e. 'Sridhan', a Gorakh-panthi, perhaps who lived in this region. It was one of the most prized tract in the Doab and also acted as a buffer area near Delhi as well as its surrounding other states (regions) during the time of Walter Reinhardt alias Gen. Samru's possession in 1776. Later on, Sardhana became famous due to its ruler, Begam Samru, and also its revenue was at least six lakhs (but by the good management of the Begam increased to ten lakh), comprising several *parganas* in today's Meerut and Muzaffarnagar districts. So, during the time of Begam Samru, the town of Sardhana was a populous and thriving place, with a spacious new gunge,... Near it was an extensive old mud fort (now in ruins), containing the Begam's arsenal, and a large Hindustani house where the commandant of her forces resided, the rest of area being chiefly occupied by mud buildings. The house of the Begam was built after the English fashion. In its rear were extensive ranges of stables for her stud, which was numerous, and to the North was a spacious entrenched cantonment for her battalions i.e. the area called Lashkarganj. The Begam's palace which also contained a valuable collection of paintings but these, later on, had been sold i.e. some in the Indian Museum and some in Government House, Allahabad. Besides these buildings, there was also a Roman Catholic Church and St. John's Roman Catholic College which still exists. Afterwards, Sardhana was constituted a municipality in the year of 1883. In present, there is a college in the Begam's palace i.e. called St. Joseph Girl's degree college. The cemetery of Sardhana (which had the graves of her close relations) is now in a ruined condition i.e. crumbling and many graves also disappeared. *IGI*, pp. 104-107; Walter Hamilton, *op.cit.*, pp. 513-514. According to this Gazetteer, Sardhana town in the province of Delhi, the Capital of the celebrated Somroo (Samru) Begum; lying Lat. 29° 12' N, Lon. 77° 31' E, 47 miles N.E. from Delhi: This is the capital of a small principality, twenty miles long by twelve in breadth, which with the town was assigned by Nudjiff (Najaf) Khan to Somroo, and on his death in 1776? (1778) was delivered over to the Begum Somroo, on condition of her keeping up a force of three battalions of infantry; also in Meerut, A Gazetteer, Vol. IV of series, (by H.R. Nevill, I.C.S.), Allahabad, 1904; *U.P. District Gazetteers, Meerut District Gazetteer*, Lucknow, 1965.

Then, Begam Samru not only helped her husband to take the possession of regions near Sardhana but also firmly guarded the territories from many rebel raiders. According to a writer : 'The mistress, however, not only kept him happy, but to his great relief, quietly took over administration of the jagir and control of his troops'.²¹ Afterwards, Gen. Samru died, due to a disease at Agra on 4th May 1778.²² Then, the Begam came from Agra after the death of Gen. Samru and had settled at Sardhana where she controlled the civil and military administration of her territories. She now became a queen of Sardhana and its adjoining territories in a real sense. Now, 'The Moghul Court supported her while it could; and Sindea had so high an opinion of her capacity, that he not only added to her possessions some land south-west of Jumna but while engaged in war with Purtaub (Pratap) Singh of Jeypore (Jaipur), he entrusted the western frontier to her protection, by stationing her force at Paneeput (Panipat)'.²³

Afterwards, she took part in number of actions against the rebels of that time including the rescue of King, Shah Alam-II, of Delhi. She had also large number of army to protect her territories. She even employed many

21. K.M. Munshi, *City of Paradise And other Kulapati's Letters* (Second Series), Bombay, 1955, p.98; Lt. Col. W.H. Sleeman, *op.cit.*, p.384. She took the control of civil and military administration and even reformed the revenue system (cropping pattern and the system of irrigating farms) by the way of discussion about the problems of the farmers, because she wanted to explore the new avenues to add to her wealth. Jaipal Singh, *op.cit.*, p.60.

22. *FS*, 21st May, 1778, Cons. No. 16; Nathaniel Middleton to Warren Hastings, G.G., Camp at Koth, 6th May, 1778; Brajendranath Banerji, *Begam Samru*, Calcutta, 1925, p. 12; Lt. Col. G.B. Malleeson, *Recreations of An Indian Official*, London, 1872, p.454; Capt. Leopold Von Orlich, *Travels in India including Sinde And The Punjab*, Vol. II, London, 1845, pp. 205-206.

23. *MM*, pp. 285-286 of Part I.

In the last quadrant of the 18th century, regarding the political condition near the regions of Delhi, Mr. Spear mentions: 'Interest has been concentrated more upon the fortunes of picturesque personalities than the fate of the people and the imperial district. The fortunes of the adventurer George Thomas, of the brigand Ghulam Qadir, of the Frenchmen de Boigne, of the Christian Princess Samru, have been more attractive subjects than the citizens of Delhi, tossed about by every wind of fortune, or the peasants of the districts, sheltering behind the mud walls of their villages or fleeing to the stony hills. But though society seemed decadent, politics rotten, and rival chieftains fierce and unscrupulous, there were method in the political madness of the day'. Percival Spear, *op.cit.*, p.2.

European military adventurers to train her army into best drill and discipline. Her famous European officers were : Capt. Monsieur Pauli (died 1782), a German military adventurer; Major Augustine Bernier (1769-1801), a French military adventurer; Gen. George Thomas (1756-1802), an Irish Naval adventurer; Col. Le Vassoult (died 1795), a French military adventurer; Col. Minsier Saleur (1765-1812), a French military adventurer, and also recruited more than hundred Europeans in her army.

After some time, George Thomas, her favourite General, left the Begam's service in the beginning year of 1792²⁴ due to the intrigues and many serious conspiracies by another French officer in the Begam's service named, Le Vassoult, who later on became a commander of the artillery of Begam Samru in 1793. In the same year, the Begam was again married to Col. Le Vassoult in a secret manner and the marriage traditions were performed by father Gregoria, a Cornelite monk.²⁵ The Begam added the name of Nobilis to her former Christian name of Joanna because earlier the Begam also had accept the Christian religion.²⁶ But, her second marriage was not proved to be a fruitful. Due to his cruel and haughty behaviour with his contemporary officers, a mutiny broke out at Sardhana in 1795, and then Le Vassoult committed suicide in May 1795 at Sardhana.²⁷

There was also a mutiny earlier by her step-son named Louis Balthazar Reinhardt whose mother was Muhammeden Lady [Behai Begam (also called Barri Bibi)], a first wife of Gen. Samru. In the early month of 1795, a mutiny broke out against the Begam in Sardhana by the instigation of Louis

24. William Francklin, *Memoirs of Mr. George Thomas*, Calcutta, 1803, p.3; *Gazetteer of the Rohtak District, 1883-84*, published Calcutta, p.19.

25. Lt. Col. W.H. Sleeman, *op.cit.*, p.388; J.P. Thompson, "An Autobiographical memoir of Louis Bouquien", Tr. from French, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. IV, part I, April 1972, serial no. 11, Ed. Ganda Singh, published Patiala, p.30; Col. Saleur, a Swiss or French Officer, in the Begam Samru's Corps, was one of the witnesses of the Begam's marriage to Le Vassoult in 1793. H.S. Bhatia, *Military History...*, p.133.

26. A. Saunders Dyer, "The Begam of Sardhana", *The Calcutta Review*, Vol. XCVIII, Jan. 1894, p. 319; Lt. Col. W.H. Sleeman, *op.cit.*, p.384; K.M. Munshi, *op.cit.*, p.98. In 7th May 1781, she embraced the Roman Catholic religion under the Christian name 'Joanna Begam'; H.S. Bhatia, *op.cit.*, p.70. She alongwith her step-son, Nawab Zafar Yab Khan baptised in 1781, and Nawab received the name, Aloysius Louis Balthazer; P. Thomas, *Churches in India*, New Delhi, 1990, p.5. Only independent Indian Christian Princess known to history; Percival Spear, *op. cit.*, p.115.

27. Banerji, *Begam Samru*, p.56; *MM*, p.290 of Part I.

Balthazar (also called Zafaryab Khan) who became furious over the matter of the distribution of property. Any how, both mutinies were suppressed by the well-wishers of the Begam and she was brought back on the throne of Sardhana.²⁸ After the end of these horrible events, she began to strengthen her power by increasing her territories, by progressing in economic development and encouraging the social development in the society for the welfare of the people. She even issued the coins in the name of King Shah Alam-II and also issued her own *Mohar* (stamp) on which Latin word 'Nobilis' was written. Moreover, she played an important role in the political sphere by her best diplomatic methods and respective manners to her contemporaries during the later 18th century upto the middle of 19th century.²⁹ She made the best efforts to create the cordial relations with many existing powers of that time e.g. the British, the Muslims especially with King, Shah Alam-II of Delhi, the Marathas, the Rajputs, the Sikhs and other powers also. She had good disciplined army, vast jagir and also took interest in the works of public utility e.g. built many forts, palaces, Churches and many other buildings.

It is mentioned in *MM* : 'of her character and dispositions somewhat may be judged from what has been said . . . Her best qualities were those of

28. *MM*, pp. 291-292 of Part I.

She was restored to the throne of Sardhana by the help of many ruling powers because she had good cordial and stable relations with many contemporary chiefs of that time. She had also good relations with the Sikhs especially, in the 19th century, with the powerful chief, Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Lahore. On that occasion, Maharaja Ranjit Singh even made an unusual request of Doctor Drever, a physician of Begam Samru, because the Maharaja was not well in health Then, Begam Samru was impressed with the loyalty and devotion of Doc. Drever, and later on she rewarded him in her 'Will' with Rs. 20,000 as a reward to his loyalty. Jaipal Singh, *op.cit.*, pp. 179-182.

29. In the first quadrant of 19th century, during the British rule in India, there was the spread of loot and plunder, gang robbery and dacoity in the society especially in the territories of Northern-Western regions of India. On that occasion, there was 'the interlocking of independent or semi-independent territories with that of Delhi. The lands of eight Rajas, four Nawabs, three Sardars, one Thakur and the Begam Samru all abutted on and some were completely surrounded by British territory (These were: the Nawabs of Kunjpura, Indri, Narnaul, Firozpur; the Khan of the Bhattis; the Sardars of Ladours (Ladwa), Thanesar, Azimgarh; the Rajas of Jind, Patiala, Nabha, Bikanir, Jaipur, Ketri, Alwar, and Bharatpur; the Rao of Shahjehanpur; the Bhai of Kaithal; the Begam Samru; the Thakur of Burao; the plunderers of Sidmuk, Bahadura and Dadra). There were also many 'dens of plunderers' among the chiefs and the villages (mostly of Gujars) around the regions of Delhi'. Percival Spear, *op.cit.*, pp. 92-93, 127, 243.

her sound judgement, her shrewdness of observation, her prudence, and occasional fidelity to her trust—chiefly as exemplified in her conduct to the unfortunate Shah Allam. For those of the heart, we fear much cannot be said. She was cruel, unforgiving, relentless, deceitful, liberal only where self-interest required it, and courteous too often merely to hide enmity. One anecdote, given by Bishop Heber, and believed to be correct, will serve to show something of her ruthless and implacable nature. In her youth, the Begum must have been handsome—her features and person small and delicate like most of the women of India; even when the writer knew her, in 1815-16, she had the remains of good looks, and a beautiful hand and arm, which she used to be rather proud of as she smoked her *hookah*. When the Bishop saw her, in 1825, she was "a very little queer-looking old woman, with brilliant, wicked-looking eyes". She never had any children, but adopted several slave-girls as daughters, whom she bestowed as such upon her favourite officers. She died very wealthy, and her *jagheer* has reverted to the company'.³⁰ Thus, the above mentioned character of the Begam by the writer of the Military Memories represents the mixture of positive and negative relations as well as behaviour of Begam Samru with other people.

More about her character and achievements, the Emperor, Shah Alam II, called with special name as 'my most beloved daughter' and also named her 'Zebul-Nissa, Ornament of her sex or Glory of woman kind. The king had also bestowed her a title i.e. "Her Highness Furzand Azuzai, oomdootual Urraikeen, Zeb-ul-Nissa"— Begam Samru" as a reward for her services to the King, Shah Alam-II. Her manners were grave and gentle, and she possessed a wonderful dignity of courage. She was frank, generous and humane, though subject to a sudden ebullitions of temper, in which she committed acts of which she quickly repented, and as soon atoned for. Her conduct to the families of all who fell or were disabled in her service was a

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 294-295 of part I. Regarding her negative character, in *MM*, it is mentioned that 'The people in the Dekhan, who knew the Begum by reputation, believed her to be a witch, who destroyed her enemies by throwing her *Chadir* at them; the word *Chadir* meaning "chain shot" as well as "woman's Veil". *MM*, p. 286 of part I; Resembling the parallel personalities of her time, 'Stewart Gordon traces parallels between Begam Samru, Ahilyabai of Indore and Mamola Begam of Bhopal. Ahilyabai was a royal widow; Mamola was a concubine, whose right to rule derived from the authority she acquired during the life-time of the ruler, Yar Muhammad'. Stewart Gordon, *Marathas, Marauders and State Formation in Eighteenth Century India*, Delhi, 1944, p.74.

convincing proof of her generosity. She possessed not only extra-ordinary cleverness but also an uncommon measure those noble qualities which secured to her the devoted attachment of all, of whatsoever race, who served under her.

In 1835, she also received a letter from Governor General, Lord Bentinck, in which it is mentioned : 'To Her Highness the Begum Sumroo'.

'My esteemed friend, I cannot leave India without expressing the sincere esteem I entertain for your highness's character. The benevolence of disposition and extensive clarity which have endeared you to thousands, have excited in my mind sentiments of the warmest admiration; and I trust that you may yet be preserved for many years, the solace of the orphan and widow, and the sure resource of your numerous dependents.

Tomorrow morning I embark for England; and my prayers and best wishes attend you, and all others who, like you exert themselves for the benefit of people of India.

I remain,
with much consideration,
'your sincere friend,
W. Bentinck.

Calcutta, March 17th, 1835'

This letter summed up all that the Begam achieved in life.³¹ On that occasion, the Begam was called 'Joanna Nobilis' Somer Zebun-Nissa Begum, the only Christian Chief in whole of Hindustan and the only lady commander of a corps of troops. . .³² Nevertheless, this lady played a very crucial and extensive role in the power struggle and contemporary politics of her time during the 18th and 19th centuries in the North-West Indian territories. About the perfect position and character of this lady, a writer mentions : 'Ruling as the head of a professionally trained mercenary army of European and Indian soldiers, inherited from her adventurer husband, she ruled her estate with an iron hand. Though, a diminutive woman standing barely four feet six, she wielded a remarkable influence in the region. Not just that, Begam Samru

31. Jaipal Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 188. The letter also indicates that she even was honoured by her last friend and ally, the British East India Company, as 'Her Highness' Begam Samru of Sardhana. See: John Lall, *op.cit.*, p.20.

32. *Ibid.*, p.189.

commanded respect and her word was law in the land she ruled'.³³ Moreover, she dressed well in Indian style and also spoke fluent and sensible Hindustani and Persian languages.

Begam Samru died at Meerut on 27th January 1836 and had buried in the cemetery of Sardhana.³⁴ The Begam bore no child from the both marriages (1st with Gen. Samru and 2nd with Le Vassault)³⁵ but she adopted a son, David Ochterlony Dye, a grandson of Samru.³⁶ At the time of the Begam's death, her large forces (army) which were under the command of Gen. Anthony Reghelini, a native of Paua, and also many military pensioners had been disbanded and dispersed by the British.³⁷ In her later life, the Begam also built a number of buildings at Sardhana, Khirwa-Jalalpur, Meerut and Delhi. She devoted the last months of her life in religious matters and ceremonies. Besides her other benevolent developments for the welfare of the estate's people, she had also constructed a Church at Sardhana for

33. Tanushree Podder, *op.cit.*; 'Begum Samru's Legacy', Text: Brinda Gill, *Discover India*, Vol. 10, No. 3, March 1997, published Hong Kong, p.54.
34. Lt. Thomas Bacon, *op.cit.*, p.55; T.W. Beale, *op.cit.*, p.373.
35. Munshi Gokul Chand, who served the Begam as Khas Munshi (like Civil Officer) for many years that he wrote a fulsome panegyric entitled 'Zebul (Jewel) Twarikh' (in Persian) book in her honour in 1822, mentioned the birth of three sons who died (perhaps earlier in the birth). This mystery was never cleared. Could Farzana herself have been the disappointed mother? John Lall, *op.cit.*, p.38.
36. David Ochterlony Dyce Sombre (1808-1851), a son-in-law of Zafaryab Khan who was a Begam Samru's step-son, also wrote a book "*Refutation of the Charge of Lunacy*". She chooses as Heir Col. Dyce's son, David Dyce, during her last days of her rule. John Lall, *op.cit.*, pp. 137, 175; She even requested for the protection of her dependents and to save the financial grant of Col. George Dyce, the son-in-law of Zafaryab Khan (from the British Government). *F & P Proceeding*, 25 Jan. to 15 Feb. 1808, NAI, p. 228; *F&P Proceeding*, 9 Aug., 1811, No. 58, NAI, (from a letter, 23 March 1811).
37. Press List of old records in the Punjab Secretariat, Vol. I, Delhi Residency & Agency (1806-1857), case no. 53, no. 1, Letter dated 30th May, 1838, No. 1446, Reg. progs. 30th June, 1838, No. 5, Lt. P.T. Cautley, Assit. Doab Canal to H. Jorrens, Dy. Sec. to Govt. of India, p.375; J.M. Lafont, "Military Activities of French Officers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh", *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. IX, No. 1, Feb. 1982, published Amritsar, p.34. She also left behind £ 700,000 money and a large civil and army of pensioners in her estate. Banerji, *Begam Samru*, p. 208; B. Banerji, "A Begam's Fortune", *The Modern Review*, Jan.-June, 1924, whole no. 205, published Calcutta, p. 413n; Ruskin Bond, "*The Lady of Sardhana*", imprint, Vol. XVIII, No 2, May 1978, published Bombay, p.65; H.S. Bhatia (Ed.), *Military History...*, p.136.

which she enlisted the services of Anthony Reghelini, an Italian architect and also her General of the army. The Church dedicated to Virgin Mary and the cost of its construction was Rs. 4 lakh. This historical and beautiful Church was completed in 1822, and was upgraded later on (13th December, 1961) by Pope John XXIII to the significant status of a Minor Basilica. Moreover she also 'endowed with large sums the Catholic Churches at Madras, Calcutta, Agra and Bombay, the Sardhana Cathedral, Sardhana poor house, St. John's Roman Catholic College and the Meerut Catholic Chapel. She also made over a lakh of rupees to the Bishop of Calcutta for charitable purposes'.³⁸ In 1824, the Begam had 'a Roman Catholic priest for her chaplain. In 1827 alongwith the other chiefs of the province, she paid her respects to Lord Amherst at Delhi. . . Her internal management was noticed by the magistrate in 1816 as highly commendable. Her management was continued exempted from the jurisdiction of the British Civil and Criminal Courts'.³⁹

She also possessed the jagirs in the Gangetic Doab and Muzaffarnagar to Aligarh i.e. *parganas* of Sardhana as well as its territories, near Kamal, Budhana, Barnawa, Baraut, Kutana, Tappal and Jewar, and moreover she had also large parts of Bagpat, Badshahpur- Jharsa (alongwith 70 villages), Kandhla, Meerut, Shamli, Shahdara and some regions of Delhi.⁴⁰ But, the Begam's Jagirs as well as other property were annexed by the British Government after her death.

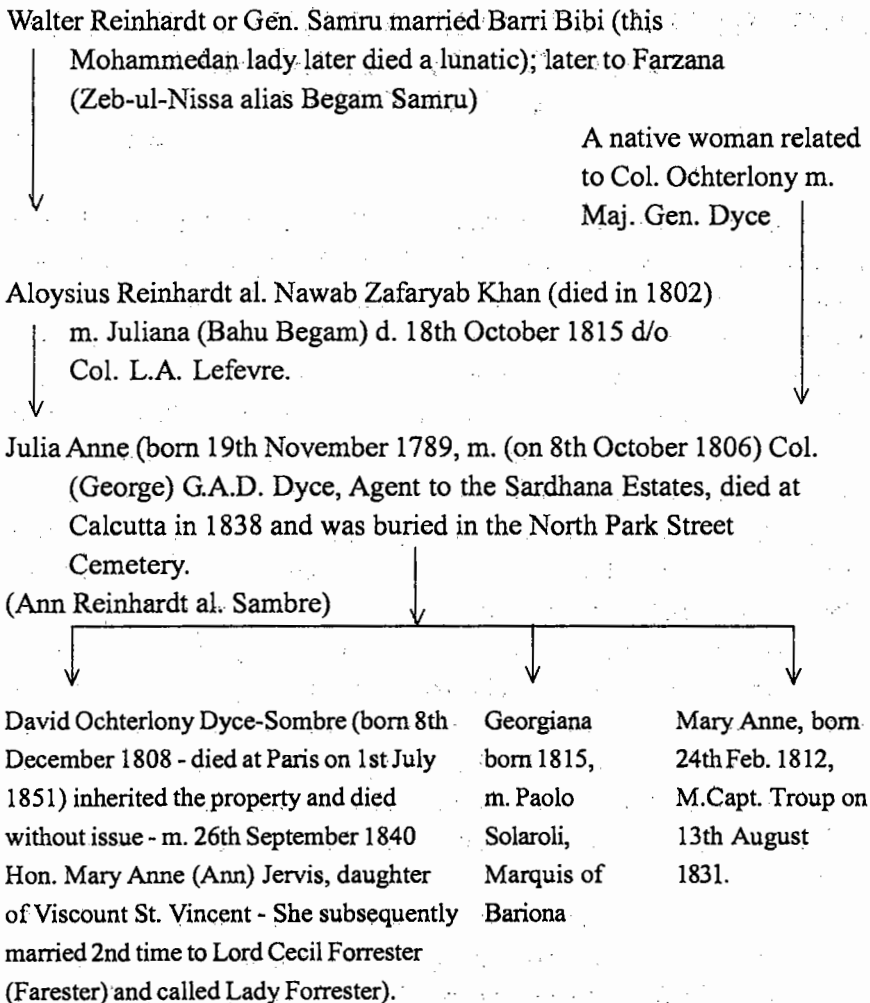
38. *IGI*, Vol. XXII, pp. 106-107; P. Thomas, *op.cit.*, p.19; 'Begum Samru's Legacy' *op.cit.*, p.54.

39. Walter Hamilton, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p.514; *Colonial Monuments in Uttar Pradesh*, published U.P. Tourism, Lucknow, 1997.

40. Brajendranath Banerji, "Begam Samru's Possessions", *The Modern Review*, July-Dec., 1925, No. 223, published Calcutta, p.308; *Gazetteer of Rohtak District, 1883-84*, published Punjab Govt., Calcutta, p.19; *Punjab District Gazetteer*, Vol. IV-A, *Gurgaon District, 1910*, published Lahore, 1911, p.20; Banerji, *Begam Samru*, pp. 134-135; K.K. Aggarwal, "Practical aspect of the British annexation policy", *Haryana Review*, Vol. XVIII, No.2, Feb. 1984, published Chandigarh, p.34; M.N. Sharma, *op.cit.*, p.133; *IGI*, p.106 (Her possessions were numerous, and included several considerable towns, such as Dankaur, the neighbourhood of great marts like Meerut, Delhi and Khurja. Her income was amounted to £ 56,721). On that occasion, in 1803, the British East India Company with some conditions regarding the Begam's territories that 'were exempted from the jurisdiction of the civil power, to the great obstruction of all executive measures of police. Her property in ready money, which is considerable, is mostly invested in the government funds, and ultimately she resided mostly at Delhi, where she was protected by the British functionaries, and a great favourite with the emperor'. Walter Hamilton, *op.cit.*, p.514.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE BEGAM'S RELATIONS

The Chronology relates to the family of Gen. Walter Reinhardt alias Gen. Samru and also the Begam's adopted family :



[Sources Consl. : H.S. Bhatia, *European Women . . .*, pp.71-72 (David Ochterlony Dyce-Sombre to whom the Pope created a Chevalier of the order of Christ); H.G. Keene, *The Great Anarchy*, p. 168; John Lall, *op.cit*].

SIKH-MUSLIM RELATIONS DURING THE LATE 18TH CENTURY : A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

*K.S. Bajwa**

Sikh faith is based on the utterances: "There is no Hindu and there is no Musalman" of its founder Guru Nanak Dev. By implication, all are men of God who is Absolute, Almighty and Creator of the Universe. Since He is the only One ; therefore all his creation be regarded as equal to each other. Inequality of any kind— social or political, on the basis of caste, colour or creed is against His will. In other words Guru Nanak Dev, exhorted fatherhood of God and brotherhood of Mankind. Guru Nanak's cosmopolitan vision advocated for the establishment of egalitarian society; a society devoid of injustice, inequality and religious bigotry. His nine successors worked hard not only to spread these ideals in far off places, but upheld even at the cost of losing their lives. The basic ideals such as service to humanity, clemency, forgiveness, humility, liberalism, democracy, respect and regard for women etc., which were emphasized in the teachings of the Sikh Gurus and enshrined in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, had have a direct bearing on the late 18th Century Sikh polity. In other words, these ideas, and the institutions which the 18th century Sikh rulers evolved, served as beacon light for them in determining and shaping their attitudes towards non-Sikh population of the state.

However, for any meaningful evaluation and appreciation of Sikh-Muslim relations in the historical perspective, it is imperative to understand the nature of the Sikh rule or more precisely, the nature of the Sikh polity during the late 18th century, which further oblige us to understand working of the institutions like *Sarbat Khalsa*, *Gurmata*, *Dal Khalsa* and *Rakhi*. But before commenting on these institutions it must be clear what the term Theocracy means. Was the late eighteenth century Sikh polity really a Theocracy as has been conceptualized by the Western as well as some of

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the Indian Historians? Going by a dictionary meaning we find in Chamber's Dictionary : 'Theocracy is that constitution of a state in which God is regarded as sole sovereign and the laws of the realms as divine commands rather than human ordinances, the priesthood necessarily becoming the officers of the invisible ruler'. But we find no instance on record when and where the Sikh priests had any kind of influence over the policies of the Sikh Chiefs. In fact observance of certain Khalsa ideals as referred earlier by the Sikh chiefs has misled the historians in thinking that *Misl* rule was a 'Theocracy'.¹

Western scholars: A.L.H. Polier, James Browne, George Forster, John Malcom, H.T. Prinsep and J.D. Cunningham writing in the late 18th and early 19th centuries about the Sikhs had characterized the late 18th century Sikh polity as 'theocratic confederate feudalism'.² Even N.K. Sinha writing in the 20th century have adopted their views about Sikh polity in toto.³ In their views, the peculiar features of this polity were the bi-annual meetings of the Khalsa called *Sarbat Khalsa* at Amritsar and the institutions like *Gurmata*, *Dal Khalsa*, *Misls* and *Rakhi*. However for proper understanding of Sikh Polity, we have to clarify our conception of these institutions.

About their understanding of the concept of *Sarbat Khalsa*, the historians are not unanimous. For instance, Prinsep had used the term *Sarbat Khalsa* for an assembly of the 'Sikh Chiefs', whereas J. D. Cunningham had equated *Sarbat Khalsa* with the entire body of the Khalsa. For N.K. Sinha, the *Sarbat Khasla* was like a 'Diet' which acted as the Central Government of the Sikhs.⁴ In its literal meaning the term *Sarbat Khalsa*,

1. Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Oriental Publishers, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 121-22.
2. A.L.H. Polier, "The Siques", Ganda Singh (ed), 'Early European Accounts of the Sikhs', *Indian Studies Past and Present*, Calcutta, 1962, pp. 61-62; James Browne, 'History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs', Ganda Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 14-17, 33; George Forster, *A Journey From Bengal To England*, Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970 (reprint- first published in 1808), 2 Vols. Vol. 1, pp. 330-31; H.T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Language Department, Punjab, Patiala 1970 (reprint- first published in 1834), pp. 17-29; John Malcom, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1812, pp.114-123, 136; J.D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, Low Price Publication, Delhi, 1990 (reprint- First published in 1849), pp. 85, 94, 95 fn. 1 and 96.
3. N.K. Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, A Mukherjee and Co., Calcutta, 1960, pp. 57, 108-111 and 115.
4. Prinsep, *Ibid.*, p.26; Cunningham, *Ibid.*, p.94; Sinha, *Ibid.*, pp. 26,108.

no doubt, refers to the entire Khalsa. It is also true that during the 1750s and 1760s the Khalsa used to come to Amritsar at the time of *Baisakhi* and *Diwali* in a very large numbers. But, available historical evidence does not suggest that all the members of the Khalsa were participating in all the deliberations at Amritsar. Nevertheless, because of the doctrine that Guruship was vested in the *Khalsa Panth*, as the collective body of the Khalsa, the gathering of the Khalsa at Amritsar and their deliberations did possess a mystic connotation for all the members. It is very much clear from the historical literature of the period that all the Sikhs were never present in Amritsar on any occasion. Generally the assemblage at *Akal Takhat Sahib* used to be in proportion to the magnitude of the danger facing the Sikhs. Also, all the Sikhs present did not necessarily participate in the meetings, those who deliberated in the name of the *Sarbat Khalsa* were regarded as doing so on behalf of the entire body of the *Khalsa*.⁵ Thus it is very clear that the *Sarbat Khalsa* cannot be regarded as the central government of the Sikhs; nor can it be equated merely with the assembly of the Sikh chiefs.⁶

Like the *Sarbat Khalsa*, the institution of *Gurmata* has been termed variously and sometimes confused with the institution of *Sarbat Khalsa*. For instance, Polier regarded *Gurmata* as the greatest counsel of the Sikhs. James Browne refers to *Gurmata* as 'Grand Diet'. To Forster it was a 'Grand Convention' of the Sikhs. For Malcolm and Prinsep, it was a 'special council' of the Sikhs.⁷ The word '*mata*' in Punjabi language means a resolution. When it is passed in an assembly of the Sikhs in the presence of the holy *Guru Granth Sahib* with a hymn read on its conclusion, it is believed to have been endorsed by the word of the Guru and is called *Gurmata*.⁸ However, John Malcolm has given a very elaborate procedure of performing *Gurmata* at Akal Takhat Sahib in Amritsar which was always held by the Akalis. On this occasion the Sikh Chiefs used to decide the line of action to be followed against the common enemy, to deliberate upon the defensive as well as offensive alliances, to pool the resources of the Sikh nation and to

5. Bhagat Singh, *Ibid.*, pp.110-116.

6. Veena Sachdeva, *Polity and Economy of the Punjab, during the Late Eighteenth Century*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1993, p.87.

7. Ganda Singh, *Ibid.*, pp.15-16, 61; Forster, *Ibid.*, p.330; Malcolm, *Ibid.*, pp.95-96 and 115; Prinsep, *Ibid.*, p.71.

8. Bhagat Singh, *Ibid.*, p.109.

choose a common leader to lead the Sikh forces.⁹ Thus, collective decision taken in the presence of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* was considered as an order from the Guru which morally bound the Sikh chiefs to carry it out with all sincerity and diligence. However, looking at the scope of the institution of *Gurmata*, it is very clear that it was not a 'council' or 'government' of the Sikhs. No doubt, sometimes its scope was extended to territorial occupation too, but it was never extended to administrative arrangements of the acquired territory.

Lack of clarity and unanimity about the institution of *Dal Khalsa Ji* is too obvious amongst the historians. For example, James Browne holds that the *Dal Khalsa* was formed by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Charhat Singh Sukarchakia and Karora Singh during the governorship of Mir Mannu in 1748. He looks upon it as the army of the state. To Prinsep, *Dal Khalsa* was the joint force of several *Misls* to collect *Rakhi* 'for expeditions of importance or any matter of more than ordinary moment'. Cunningham equates *Dal Khalsa* with the army of the theocracy of Singhs and attributes its creation to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. N.K. Sinha refers to it as the 'grand army' of the confederacy.¹⁰ However, taking into consideration the arguments and conceptions of these historians together with the actual activities of the *Dal Khalsa*, it becomes very clear that *Dal Khalsa* was essentially a combination of forces of several Sikh Sardars for a particular purpose. Throughout the late 18th century Sikh history, it never assumed the character of a single unit or standing army of the Sikhs, but a temporary combination of several units acting in concert.¹¹ Had it been so, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia had never joined Adina Beg Khan and fought against his own co-religionists. Institution of *Dal Khalsa*, along with *Sarbat Khalsa* and *Gurmata*, however, did play a significant role during the late 18th Century Sikh History, enabling the Sikhs to wade through the pools of blood and acquire political power. Significantly, these institutions did not have any kind of negative influence on the administration of the territories of the Sikh chiefs. History bear witness to it. Each Sikh *Misldar* or chief was a monarch in his respective domain.

Another peculiar feature of the 18th century Sikh polity was *Rakhi* system. Under this system, the offer of *Rakhi* (lit. protection) was made, to the people of the towns and villages of the Punjab and was actively pursued

9. Malcolm, *Ibid.*, pp.120-23.

10. Ganda Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 33; Prinsep, *Ibid.*, p.26; Cunningham, *Ibid.*, p.85; Sinha, *Ibid.*, p.108.

11. J.S. Grewal, "Eighteenth Century Sikh Polity", *From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh: Essays in Sikh History*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1972, p.98.

by the Sikhs as a regular feature of their activities. However, chaotic conditions created by political turmoil and conflicting political claims put forward by the Mughals, the Afghans, the Marathas and the Sikhs, to extend their control over the province completely shattered the peace of Punjab. During the 1750's to 1760s, the Punjab virtually remained under dual monarchy. During this phase the people of the Punjab did not know whether they were under the protection of the emperor of Delhi or Kabul or Kandhar. Due to internal lawlessness and external danger, the state political apparatus had literally collapsed which further deteriorated plight of the Punjabis. The poor peasants were being squeezed by various authorities. There was no prospect of law and security. Thus, when the Punjabis were being ruined economically and politically and there was no hope of peace or justice, the Sikhs like true sons of the soil devised the institution of *Rakhi*.¹²

Under the *Rakhi* system, the protection was granted to the people irrespective of caste, colour or creed against foreign invasion and internal exploitation of *Zamindars*, government officials and against the depredations of the local adventures. Verily, the full safety of their persons and property was ensured in return for one fifth of their income twice a year after each harvest, that is *Harri* and *Sawni* or *rabi* and *kharif*. Soon, almost whole of Punjab came under the protection the Sikh chiefs and by 1770s this offer was even extended to the inhabitants of the Gangetic Doab.¹³ For example, writing in the 1770s, A.L.H. Polier, observed that the Sikhs had come into possession of 'the whole Soubah of Lahore the greatest part that of Multan and part of that of Delhi, including all the country called Punjab'. At this point of time, the Sikh chiefs used to collect a certain yearly tribute from some areas of the Delhi and Agra provinces, even from the Nawab of Avadh. Polier further noticed that this tribute was called *Racky* (*Rakhi*) and 'in general a trifle will satisfy them, from two to five percent of the revenues, particularly if at a distance; and provided this is regularly paid, it is said no further hindrance or molestation will be received from them. On the contrary, the chief, to whom the tribute or *Racky* is paid, takes the district under his protection and is ready to fight against any of the brethren who might think of disturbing it.'¹⁴ Writing in the 1780s, James Browne asserts

12. Bhagat Singh, *Ibid.*, pp.77-79; H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*; Munshiram Manohar Lal, ND, 1999, Vol.II, pp.73-132.

13. Bhagat Singh, *Ibid.*, p.79; Gupta, *Ibid.*, pp. 82, 126-28.

14. Ganda Singh, *Ibid.*, p.62.

that, 'the Sikh chief not only himself refrains from plundering him but will protect him from all others; and this protection is by general consent held so far sacred that even if the grand army passes through a Zamindari; where the safe-guards of the lowest Sikh chief are stationed, it will not violate them.'¹⁵

Gorge Campbell observed that the Sikh chiefs were not 'exclusive and unduly prejudiced in favour of their own people but employed capable Mohammedans and others almost as freely as Sikhs.'¹⁶

There is no doubt about the fact that during the first half of the eighteenth century the Sikhs suffered a lot at the hands of the Mughal and Afghan rulers, but when they became the sovereign ruler, they were not revengeful or intolerant to the Muslim subjects as such.¹⁷ However, as rulers they ungrudgingly appointed Muslims to responsible posts in almost all the departments of state administration. For instance, Lakhana Doger, a Muslim was appointed commander-in-chief of his Army by Maharaja Ala Singh.¹⁸ Ghoshi Khan and Mian Khushal were serving as *Topchi* under Mahan Singh Shukarchakia and Imam Hussain under Jodh Singh Wazirabadia. It appears that almost all the Sikh rulers had have Muslims as their artillery officers.¹⁹ Afghans of Urmar, Yahyapur and Tanda (now in district Hoshiarpur) had joined the forces of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia due to his non-sectarian policy. Besides he had a large number of Muslims in his service who had full liberty to perform their religious rituals as they pleased.²⁰

Besides Army, a large number of Muslim *Chaudharis*, *Muqaddams*, *Diwans*, *Kardars* and *Lambardars* were serving as state functionaries and were performing the same duties as they used to do under the Mughal/ Afghan rule. For instance, Usman Khan under Jai Singh Kanahiya, Ahmad Khan under Kapur Singh Saurianwala, Ghulam Qadar under Jodh Singh

15. *Ibid.*, pp.16,100.

16. George Campbell, *Memoirs of My Indian Career*, (ed.) by C.E. Bernard, Macmillan and Company, London, 1892, 2001. Vol. I, p.180.

17. Forster, *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 321 ; Bhagat Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 107

18. Kirpal Singh, *Life of Maharaja Ala Singh of Patiala and his Times*, Khalsa College, Amritsar, 1954, p.139.

19. Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families in the Territories under the Punjab Government*, Lahore, 1865, p. 468; *Punjab Government Records, Ludhiana Agency, 1808-15*, II, pp.188-89.

20. Bhagat Singh, *Ibid.*, p.108.

Wazirabadia, Suba Khan and Teeka Khan of Talwandi under Bhag Singh Hallowalia, Rahmat Khan Waraich of Jalalpur under Gujar Singh Bhangi, Dasaundi Khan of Chimiari under Nahar Singh Chamariwala, Khudadad Khan and Yadgar Khan of Firozke under Suddh Singh Chhina, Mian Muhammad Ashiq, Mian Mohkam Din, Mir Shadi Khan and Mir Badruddin (all from Lahore) were some of the important *Chaudharis* under the Sikh rulers. Nur Burhan under Ran Singh Nakkiye, Sahib Khan under Nahar Singh Chamariwala, Muhammuddin of Mauza Kot Budha under Gulab Singh, Mohammuddin of Mauza Saggian under Lehna Singh, were serving as Muqaddams²¹. Fateh Singh Ahluwalia appointed Qadir Bakhsh as his special officer and sent him to Maharaja Ranjit Singh as his ambassador. Also, Qazi Nur Muhammad served him as Diwan and *Mukhtiar* and Sher Ali Kakezhi of Danwali as Diwan.²²

As during the Mughal rule, the primary unit of administration was the village itself. Here the village *Panchayat* (*Panches*) was always chosen from men of the best reputation amongst the villagers without any consideration to religion. Significantly the office of *Qazi* and *Mufti* continued to function under the Sikh Rule as it was during the Mughal period. For instance, Qazi Kamaluddin was performing his duties at Wazirabad, Qazi Hazi at Gujrat and Qazi Abdul Rahman at Gujranwala. In the case of the city of Batala, the names of five Qazis has been mentioned in the contemporary documents. Qazi's court was quite popular amongst the non-Muslims too because of the uniform application of the law. Mostly, the cases were decided according to traditions. In the case of succession the Muslims were allowed to follow their own law of succession.²³

Dispossessed Muslim chiefs were treated with indulgence. For example, when Tara Singh Dalewalia took over Nakodar from Rai Ahmed Manj, he was granted land for subsistence. In 1767 when Charhat Singh Shukarchakia took over Pind Dadan Khan, few villages were granted to

21. J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1975, pp. 45, 57, 58, 93-94, 110; Veena, *Ibid.*, p.74.

22. Bhagat Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 109.

23. Bhagat Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 135; J.S. Grewal, *In the By Lanes of History*, II AS, Shimla, 1975, pp. 25-32; Documents, II, III, X, XIII, XV, XVIII and XXXII; The Qazi in the Pargaria', *Historians Punjab; Miscellaneous Articles*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1974; pp.38-74.

Sahib Khan Khokhar, the ousted chief. Likewise, five villages were also granted to the wife of Ghulam Muhammad Khan Chattha by Mahan Singh Shukarchakia. When Milkha Singh Thepuria occupied Rawalpindi in 1767, he allowed Mansur Khan and Shadman Khan the sons of Muqarrab Khan Gakkhar to retain Pharwala in subsistence *Jagir*. Significantly, the most notable tribes of Rawalpindi were allowed to retain 192 villages in *Jagir*.²⁴ When Maharaja Ala Singh ousted Sadar Khan Rajput of village Munak, he was provided a lucrative post. These examples are multiple.²⁵

While conferring religious land grants, service *Jagirs*, *Inam Jagirs* etc. to persons and institutions no discrimination was made with the Muslims. As a rule the Sikh rulers confirmed the imperial grants and gave fresh one to *Sayyids*, *Shaikhs*, *Pirzadas*, *Mirasis*, *Khanqahs*, *Takiyas* and *Masjids*.²⁶ For instance, Maha Singh Shukarchakia granted few villages to Khudadad Khan, son of the *Chaudhari* of Jalalpur on the condition of serving with twenty horsemen. Mian Khan was receiving *Jagir* worth 15,000 rupees to perform military services under Sada Kaur. Qazi Abdul Rahman was given land grant to perform civil duties by Mahan Singh Shukarchakia. *Chaudhari* Nagalia received 22 *bighas* of land as *Inam* from Jai Singh Kanahiya. Jai Singh Kanahiya gave 160 *Ghumaons* of land worth 100 rupees to *Chaudhari* Mian Khan, in addition to five percent commission (*Pachotra*) and two *Sers* of grain per *Maund*. Some other known grantees were *Chaudhari* Sultan Khan under Gurbakhsh Singh Kanahiya, *Chaudhari* Ikhlash Khan under Jodh Singh Vegila, *Chaudhari* Khudadad Khan under Suddh Singh Chhina, *Chaudhari* Mohammad Azim and *Chaudhari* Imam Bakhsh under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. Not only the *Chaudharis*, but Muslim *lambardars* too received land grants as *Inam* from the Sikh rulers. For instance, Jai Singh Kanahiya gave 150 *Ghumaons* of land worth 90 rupees in Gurdaspur district to Sultan Ali, a *lambardar*. Gurbakhsh Singh Kanahiya granted fifty *Ghumaons* of land to Mayya and Jiwan the *Guzzar Lambardars* of the village Dagowal. Similar grants were received by Munim Khan from Milkha Singh of Amritsar and Muhammaduddin from Lehna Singh of Lahore.²⁷

24. Veena Sachdeva, *Ibid.*, pp.117-18.

25. Kirpal Singh, *Ibid.*, p.139.

26. Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs : Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1978, pp.138-39, 164-66; Prinsep, *Ibid.*, pp.27-29; Veena, *Ibid.*, pp.126-27.

27. Veena Sachdeva, *Ibid.*, p. 117.

Village community or the life in the rural Punjab was the best example of Sikh-Muslim rapprochement, even the Hindus for that matter. In the rural population which formed the vast majority in the country, several faiths were so strongly mixed up that one could hardly be distinguished from the other. In a village, people of all castes and creeds lived amicably. The same village often comprised Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Rajputs, Jats and people of other castes. On important occasions such as births, deaths, marriages and holy days or festivals, they fraternized with each other. On social and religious occasions, they used to exchange greetings and presents, and enjoyed festivities in common. However, the most significant aspect of the village life was the worship of the common village deities. Of course, the women played an important part in this respect. For instance, a Muslim woman who had not offered to the smallpox goddess felt that she had deliberately risked her child's life. Even on special occasions, she fed Brahman priests. Similarly a Sikh or a Hindu woman regularly made offerings at the shrines of Muslim Saints on every Thursday and at the time of a marriage in the family.²⁸ T. Forrtescue has given a very graphic picture of the relations of the villagers. He observed, "no instances occur of a proprietor driven from the village by oppression or violence of one or any number of other shares; on the contrary, it is observable that they tender each other the most friendly and essential aids when in distress. They will supply cattle, till the lands themselves, contribute money when a sharer has been really unfortunate and they assist him in the disposal of his produce, in providing seeds, bullocks and implements should they be satisfied with them. This feeling. is extended to the widow and necessitous family of a deceased sharer, and its effect scarcely surpassed."²⁹

Significantly, even during the course of struggle with the Mughal and Afghan rulers, the Sikhs did not entertain any enmity against the Muslims or their religion. Their struggle was against the government and not against the Muslims. There is no instance on record of *Dal Khalsaji* or any of the *Misl* force having even attacked the Muslim village or their place of worship. If at any time mosques came to be attacked by them it was because they were the nerve centres of crusade (*Jehad*) against the Sikhs in those days.

28. Hari Ram Gupta, *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp.528-29.

29. Punjab Government Records, Delhi Residency and Agency 1807-57, Vol.I, p.32. Quoted in Bhagat Singh, *Ibid.*, pp.129-30.

Otherwise there are instances when the Sikh Gurus and Sikh chiefs built mosques for their Muslim friends and subjects.³⁰

As a ruler the Sikhs were very popular with their Muslim subjects due to their non-discriminating policies. For instance, when Ahmed Shah Abdali appointed Dadan Khan as governor of Lahore and retired to his country, Lehna Singh Bhangi who had left Lahore on the approach of Abdali, came out of his retreat and came close to Lahore, the courtiers of Dadan Khan advised him to step down from his office and surrender it to Sardar Lehna Singh. Not only this, they advised the governor to see Lehna Singh and ask him for subsistence allowance which was graciously granted. It is also on record that Lehna Singh used to give turbans and bestow honours on *Qazis* and *Muftis* on the occasion of *Eid*.³¹ *District Gazetteer Gujrat* records: 'The names of Sardar Gujar Singh and Sahib Singh are often in the mouths of the people, who look back to their rule without the smallest bitterness. They seem indeed to have followed an enlightened policy, sparing no effort to induce the people harried by twenty years of constant spoliation to settle down once more to peaceful occupation.'³² It is interesting to note that when Sayid Ghulam Ghaus, incharge of a theological seminary of Batala fled and sought asylum with Sardar Mahan Singh, the Shukarchakia chief helped him in the restoration of his office.³³

One of the peculiar features of the Sikh rule was the running up of *Langar*. The institution of *Langar* had started with Guru Nanak Sahib at Kartarpur (Now in Pakistan) for the way farers as well as the needy, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. These *langars* of the Sikh rulers particularly during the time of famines or other natural calamities proved to be a great help to the Punjabis. *District Gazetteer Montgomery* records that famine of 1783, occurred during the time of Budh Singh who is said to have 'sold all his property and to have fed the people with grain from the proceeds.'³⁴ Hundreds of people used to take their meals daily from the *Langar* of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.³⁵ These *Langars* of the Sikh chiefs were so popular that the hearths where the *Langar* was cooked came to be

30. Bhagat Singh, *Ibid.*, p.73; Ganda Singh, *Ibid.*, p.58, fn. 18.

31. Bhagat Singh, *Ibid.*, pp.107-108.

32. *D.G. Gujrat*, 1892-93, pp.21-22.

33. Bhagat Singh, *Ibid.*, p.108.

34. *D.G. Ludhiana*, 1888-90, p.72; *D.G. Montgomery*, 1883-84, p.34.

35. Bhagat Singh, *Ibid.*, p.108.

regarded as sacred places of pilgrimage. For instance, Maharaja Ala Singh had started *Langar* which was supervised by his wife Fateh Kaur. The hearths where the *Langar* was cooked are still preserved at Barnala and considered as sacred places of pilgrimage by the people of the locality.³⁶

Summing up, we may say that invariably all the Sikh rulers of the late eighteenth century kept the welfare of their subjects, dispensation of justice and service to the people upper most in their mind. They created a close identification with the people of the land, rejected the theory of the Divine Rights of the kings and adopted completely a non-sectarian policy in the conduct of state affairs. Appointments were not made on communal basis but on merit. As a result of their policies the peasantry, which were predominantly Muslim, were contented and satisfied. There is no incident on record where the Sikh rulers destroyed any mosques or resorted to any kind of religious persecution. Also, we do not hear about any revolt during this phase of history by the Muslims against their Sikh rulers. If Maharaja Ranjit Singh is considered the most secular ruler of Indian history like Akbar the Great, he was inheriting this tradition from the late eighteenth century Sikh chiefs, who had evolved this tradition on the basis of Sikh ideals as enunciated by the Sikh Gurus and are enshrined in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

36. Kirpal Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 147-48.

BIPRAN KI REET

Sangat Singh*

This Paper focuses on *bipran ki reet* or rituals of non-conforming elements or faiths, and how these constitute the negation of the Sikh faith.

The couplet :

Jab lag rahai khalsa niara, tab lag tej dio mai sara;
Jab ih gahai bipran ki reet, mai na karon in ki partit.
(ਜਬ ਲਗ ਰਹੈ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਨਿਆਰਾ ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ ਦੀਉ ਮੈਂ ਸਾਰਾ।
ਜਬ ਇਹ ਗਹੈ ਬਿਪਰਨ ਕੀ ਰੀਤ ਮੈਂ ਨ ਕਰੋਂ ਇਨ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ।)

(So long Khalsa keeps its distinct character,
That long it shall have from me all is refulgence;
When it ingrains rituals of non-conforming elements (*bipran*),
I shall not look into its welfare).

is taken from *Khalsa Nama*, (*Sarb Loh Granth*). It contains Guru Gobind Singh's high appraisal of the Khalsa in glowing terms as "my spirit", "my faith", "my best friend", "my honour and dignity", "in whom I repose all my attention", who is "part of an ocean as a drop of water is", and so on ; in saying that Guru Gobind Singh affirmed "I am not mentioning an iota of falsehood" for "I am holding Guru Nanak (who is like) *parbrahm* (to me) as a witness". It was after such high avocations that Guru Gobind Singh in the last two lines, as above, was warning the Khalsa to be *niara*, and not fall a victim to *bipran ki reet*.

It is obvious that this hymn which, but for possible interpolation of one line¹ is in accordance with the principles of Sikhism, was composed during the last couple of years of Guru Gobind Singh's life. It lays emphasis on

*S-181, Greater Kailash, Part 18, New Delhi.

1. ਸੇਸ (ਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਨਾਗ) ਰਸਨਾ ਸਾਰਸ (ਸਰਸਵਤੀ) ਸੀ ਬੁਧ, ਤਦਪਿ ਨ ਉਪਮਾ ਬਰਨਤ ਸੁਧ
[*Ses (Sheshnag) rasna saras (saraswati) si budh, tadap na upma barnat sud*]. For, Guru Gobind Singh or Sikhism had nothing to do with Brahmanical *Sh'eshnag* or *Saraswati*. It is obvious that we must subject all the *banis* attributed to Guru Gobind Singh to a test on the touch-stone of *gurbani*.

three aspects of the Sikh movement. Firstly, continuation of mission of Guru Nanak to its final culmination or stage; two, the relevance of Guru Nanak's teachings to humanity for all times and their uniqueness; and, three, warning the Khalsa or the Sikhs of *bipran* in plural, as against *bipar*, in singular, signified by Brahmanistic and other obscurantist tendencies besides mythical and obscurantistic religions. These constituted an obvious threat.

Guru Gobind Singh's swearing by the name of Guru Nanak who, to him, was like *Parbrahm*² (God) signified that Guru Gobind Singh regarded himself as inheritor of the Sikh movement initiated by Guru Nanak. As *gurbani*. Sikh hymns mention, and some historians like Mohsin Fani affirm, successor Gurus were considered forming part of the same spirit of Guru Nanak that permeated the Sikh Gurus to their culmination. *Bhatts* in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* sing of the same spirit (*Jot uha Jugat sae seh kaaia pher paltiye*) (ਜੋਤ ਉਹਾ ਜੁਗਤ ਸਾਇ ਸਹਿ ਕਾਇਆ ਫੇਰ ਪਲਟੀਐ) Guru Gobind Singh's affirmation in first person tends to contradict the efforts of *bipar* Brahmins, to introduce false elements in Sikh theology in post Banda Singh Bahadur era, when the Sikhs were running from pillar to post for their very survival.

Guru Nanak had begun a process of initiation of his disciples by recitation of *Mul Mantra*,³ the basic precept. The succeeding Gurus had introduced *Manjis* and *Pirrahs*, and later *Masands*, to carry on the initiation work to the considerable Sikh community. Guru Gobind Singh abolished *Masand* system, and brought in instead impersonal *Pahul* at the *Baisakhi* of 1699. This did not require the person of the Guru. Otherwise, there was no differentiation between the initiation done by Guru Nanak or his successors to the one now in vogue since 1699. The disciples, earlier known as Sikhs were now called the Khalsa.

The sumum bonum of Guru Nanak's philosophy of universal humanism is contained in *mul mantra*. Guru Nanak's placing the digit 1 [(which according to Bhai Gurdas is pronounced *ekankar*—the only infinite one) by the side of (*oankaru*)—the only Supreme Being God] contained the

2. Guru Arjan in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* had earlier mentioned of Guru Nanak in similar terms. ਸਭ ਤੇ ਵੱਡਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਨ ਕਲ ਰਾਖੀ ਮੇਰੀ - SGGS, p.750.

3. The *Mul Mantra* has been translated elsewhere by the author as follows: The Only Infinite One (1), the Only Supreme Being—God (*oankar*) the Eternal (*sati*) the Universal Spirit (*namu*) the Creator (*karta*), the All-Pervading (*Purakhu*), the Sovereign (*nirbhau*), the Harmonious (*nirvairu*), the Immortal (*akala*), the Embodiment (*murti*), the Un-incarnated (*ajuni*), the Self-existent (*Saibhan*), the Enlightener (*guru*), the Bountiful (*prasad*)!

quintessence of Sikhism, of universal humanism, of all humanity being the children of One God, without any distinctions whatsoever. This struck at the roots of *varnashramdharma*, the Brahmanical caste system with inbuilt inequalities, and was not acceptable to them. Sikhism has no place for *jantra*, *mantra*, *tantra* fetishes, or nature worship, or *havans*, or statues of gods and goddesses, much less God's taking birth(s), and so on and so forth. This constituted the root cause of the conflict that is running even now. Guru Gobind Singh in his *Zafarnamah* to Aurangzeb contends that his conflict with the hill chiefs was because they were worshippers of statues, whereas he was for dissuading them from doing so.

Another facet of the same was Guru Nanak's concept of *Sabad Guru*, the Word as Guru or God, that he enunciated in *Siddh Goshti*, but was obviously much older, or right from the beginning. In consonance with that, that was his concept of universal humanism, of equality, not only within the caste system, but also between the guru and his disciples. This was explicated at his bowing to Bhai Lehna as Guru Angad. The concept of *gur-chela* is writ large in *Guru Granth Sahib* and the Sikh philosophy. In consonance with that, Guru Gobind Singh asked for baptism at the hands of the five Sikhs, when he passed on the Guruship to them. It was in pursuance of that, that Guru Gobind Singh had to make good his escape from Chamkaur.

Now, came the final denouement. Guru Gobind Singh conferred eternal Guruship on the Word (*Sabad*) which now became *Guru Granth Sahib* or *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. At the time, no other *Granth* existed. This concept of word of God as Guru, struck at the roots of Brahmanical philosophy which believed in superiority and personal worship of Brahmans as against other classes. The concept of a *deh-dhari*, human bodied guru, formed the fulcrum of Brahmanism, which snatched self respect from other classes. Sikhism struck at the roots of Brahmanical thinking and invited everlasting enmity right from the days of Guru Nanak who was described as devilish and without rhythm (*Koi kahe bhutna ko betala* — Maru Mahala 1, *SGGS*, p.991).

This concept of Khalsa, the end product of Guru Nanak's movement had three distinct characteristics: to be physically distinct, mentally alert and spiritually enlightened: to protect the human rights of the weak and the deprived, and to oppose tyranny and oppression. Since it upheld social values it constituted a revolutionary force. The Khalsa maintained its character under Banda Singh Bahadur when it snatched Punjab's sovereignty, however short-lived, and brought about a social revolution in the thinking of the

peasantry and people of all classes.

This brings us to the efforts of *bipar* in post-Banda period to go on the offensive and cause confusion amongst the remnant Sikh community which was on the run for life. This took two forms. One, they removed certain pages from available Sikh religious works and other literature, to replace these, introducing Brahmanical compositions therein, corrupting the Sikh philosophy. Two, they initiated a whole body of literature on Sikh history and philosophy which in due course took the form of *Gurbilas's*, *Rehatnamas*, historical works, and eventually ending up in *Bachittar Natak* which was not heard of for atleast another seven decades, rather more, after the passing away of Guru Gobind Singh. In the process they spuriously brought in Bhai Mani Singh as compiler of *Bachittar Natak*, and also Mata Sundri who lived for over three decades after Guru Gobind Singh and provided the necessary guidance to the Khalsa. The spurious letter of Mata Sundri about *Bachittar Natak* is written with a nib which was invented nine decades after her demise. So was the case of the alleged discussion involving Bhai Sukha Singh and Bhai Mehtab Singh who successfully beheaded Massa Rangar at Darbar Sahib. Brahmans derived their hardheadedness from the fact that the Sikhs in mid-18th century were on the run, and their shrines had been taken over by *Udasis* and *Nirmalas* who were their collaborators.

To begin with, they faked Guru Gobind Singh's autobiography wherein firstly, he is made to say that Guru Tegh Bahadur performed austerities and penances at various Hindu places of worship for his birth at Patna Sahib; and secondly, Guru Gobind Singh is made to say that in the previous birth at Hemkunt, he had become one with *Mahakal*, *Kalka*, and came to this birth on a specific mission at the behest of *Mahakal*. All these fictitious stories constituted the institution of Brahmanical effort to concoct the whole body of literature showing Guru Gobind Singh to be votary of Hindu gods and goddesses. So was the case with allegations about Guru Gobind Singh's arranging a *havan* at Naina Devi before revelation of the Khalsa, which are beyond the comprehension of historians like Bannerji. This was first published as *Bachittar Natak*, and later in 1880's published as *Dasam Patshah ka Granth*, *Dasam Granth* and still later *Sri Dasam Granth*. This *Granth* is mutually contradictory which itself is sufficient to pull it down. Guru Gobind Singh is quoted to say that he does not have faith in *Ram*, *Rahim*, *Puran* or *Quran* etc. and that he is worshipper only of One God. But the *bipar* is not bothered about that. Their six systems of philosophy

are mutually contradictory; mutual hostility and contradictions are part and parcel of their faith, life and philosophy. What is relevant is that *bipars* are in power in India and they want to reduce Sikhism or Guru Nanak's mission to be a part of mutually contradictory Hinduism.

The Nirmala scholars did maximum damage to Sikhism. They interpreted the whole body of Sikh theology and philosophy in Vedic context and rendered assistance to *bipran's* efforts to distort Sikhism. They strongly emphasized that *Vedas* were the ultimate truth, while *Gurbani* explained the Vedic philosophy in *desi*, rural tongue, or that *gurbani* did not contradict Vedic philosophy including fastings, but accepted *nam japna*. They also corrupted the Sikh presentation. For instance, what were the *banis*, hymns, recited by Guru Gobind Singh at the time of revelation of Khalsa on *Baisakhi* 1699? All the references, whatsoever, to the Sikh literature in 18th century, are either silent (cf. Sainapat, 1711) or present a distorted picture (cf. Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Chaupa Singh, Koer Singh, Kesar Singh Chhiber, Khushwaqt Rai, Rattan Singh Bhangoo, Bhai Santokh Singh, Giani Gian Singh, Sukha Singh and others. Kesar Singh Chhiber mentions of *Japji Sahib* and *Anand Sahib*, while Bhai Santokh Singh who conducted a lot of research work talks of *Japji Sahib*, *Swayyas* and stanzas from *Anand Sahib*. Bhai Vir Singh, was highly misinformed to mention of administration of baptism the next day after *Baisakhi* to the Five Beloved Ones, one of whom, according to him, was made to recite only *Mul Mantra*, five times. Significantly, none of them mentions of five *banis* being recited at the time.

Now, look at the doings of *Rehat Maryada Committee*, a body of leading 25 Sikhs, set up by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) in 1931, and assisted by various set ups including *Deras*, *Thaths*, *Tikanas*, etc. Without an iota of evidence, the Committee in 1936 introduced 5 *banis*, including *Jap* and *Chaupai* from the so-called *Dasam Granth* as a compromise. All the people present here, including you and me, have undergone this baptism of 5 *banis* which historically has no basis, whatsoever. This has unnecessarily created a raucous about the relevance or otherwise of the so-called *Dasam Granth*. If such an issue had come up before the Singh Sabha, headed by Prof. Gurmukh Singh, the decision would have been in the adverse. The *Rehat Maryada Committee* should have been firm. Meanwhile in 1935, Bhai Vir Singh erroneously nodded his head at the identification of Hemkunt Sahib in Uttaranchal Pradesh (now Uttarakhand) as the site wherein Guru Gobind Singh had performed penances in his

previous birth. This, unnecessarily helped to create another centre of pilgrimage for the Sikhs, and also falsify Guru Gobind Singh himself who swears to be a successor of Guru Nanak. We must understand that this is another *bipran ki reet*, for us.

The decolonisation of the subcontinent in August 1947 constituted a land mark with Muslims getting Pakistan, the Hindus represented by Congress the residue India, while the Sikhs drawing a blank and losing everything. The Sikh leaders never realised that Brahmanism in ascendancy would act like an *ajgar*, python. The power in 1947 fell to the hands of Jawaharlal Nehru, a descendent of Gangu Brahman, who had family animosities of centuries to settle. Besides, M.K. Gandhi right from first decade of 20th century was a rabid anti-Sikh, emitted venom and was out to treat the Sikhs only as part of Hinduism.

The SGPC since its creation in 1925 did no *dharma prachar*, and the position continued in post-1947 era. Even thousands of *Satyagrahis* for Punjabi Suba were not administered baptism, to be firm in Sikh identity and faith. However, so long Master Tara Singh remained the supreme leader till 1960s, he kept an equilibrium in the various sections of Khatri and Aroras, Jats and non-Jats, *Ramdassias* and *Mazhbis*-, *Ramgarhias*, *Ahluwalias* and other classes. After the split and emergence of Sant Fateh Singh and his successors, things were different. Caste among the Sikhs came to play an increasing role. Jats came right on the top. Earlier, during 1965 India-Pakistan War, Pakistan President publically stated that Darbar Sahib was not going to be subjected to aerial attacks. As against that, Indira after 222 years of Ahmad Shah Abdali's last ransacking of Darbar Sahib dismantled the Akal Takht, with 300 bullet marks over Darbar Sahib. The massacre of Sikhs in Amritsar and all over Punjab, and later in November 1984 in Delhi and other parts, reminded one of Nadir Shah's misdoings in 1739.

The Sikh *Jathedars* in their conclave in September 1984, for the last time, were successful in getting back the possession of Darbar Sahib from the government, of course with a lot of restrictions. What followed thereafter for a decade was state terrorism in Punjab. If during Bhindranwale's times, a *basanti* / yellow Sikh turban with full Sikh *rehat maryada* was in a vogue, the state terrorism in the words of M.K. Dhar, a former Joint Director in India's Intelligence Bureau, signalled a full fledged state attack on Sikhism, with no holds barred. The installation of KPS Gill as Director General Police meant a regime of rape and rapine at mass scale, and a wholesale slaughter

of the Sikh youth, 15-35 years of age. This yielded the Police promotions, prizes and money from the people at a massive scale. The introduction of Cats was another sordid affair. The election of Beant Singh as Chief Minister with 6 percent votes in 1992, helped to accelerate the process, so much so that by 1993 the Sikh youth started shedding their *keshas* and declaring that they had nothing to do with Bhindranwale, or Sikh ideology. This was what the *bipars* wanted. The state terrorism receded in 1995 after the assassination of Beant Singh in an internal police process. It was another matter that people like Hawara and others were hauled up. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court in a number of cases ranted against K.P.S. Gill, but he had the full support of the Union Government; then headed by P.V. Narsimaha Rao.

Another feature of this era was the upsurge of *Sant Babas* in Punjab. With official patronage, and support of roughs, they had a heyday in spreading their tentacles in Punjab, and all over. Mainly, their income came from drug mafia. If there were about 13,000 villages in Punjab, there were/are, as of now, 15,000 *deras*, some with *marhis*, *massans/kabars*. Prominent amongst these are: *Damdami Taksal*, *Nanaksar Thaths*, *Akhand Kirtani Jathas* (it has now been entrusted with *dharma prachar*), *Nirankaris*, *Naamdharis*, *Kaleran wale*, *Rare wale*, *Nihang Jathas*, *Udasis*, *Dhadrian wale*, *Pehowa wale*, *Ashutoshie*, *Bhaniaaran wale*, *Sirsa wale*, *Radha Soamis*, *Nilpanthie*, etc. with multiple set ups. The people from backward classes who resented Jat's domination and were treated rather badly were especially attracted. The SGPC and *Jathedars* did nothing to ameliorate their lot. Most of the *Deras* have been given land by the various governments at concessional prices. All of them have their own *ragis/pracharaks*, who narrate various types of stories, some genuine, mostly made up. They celebrate anniversaries of their elders; they bless women with a male offspring, causing female infanticide. Their main objective is to serve as provocateurs of pan-Hindu forces, to infiltrate into Sikhism and distort its image. Many of them don't accept *Panthic Rehat Maryada*. They fit very well within the *Bipar* framework, and hence their upsurge as a by-product of state terrorism.

The Shiromani Akali Dal's (Badal's) declaring itself as a Punjabi party in 1996, shedding its Sikh ideals, came as a rude shock to the Sikh community, but was in accordance with the wishes of the Union Government, and of the Hindutava forces. However, its party manifesto, which brought it into power in February 1997 elections in Punjab, made the people believe that

their vows would be over once the party was in power.

As of now, for the last several years, the Sikh youth in rural areas of *Malwa* have shed *keshas* to the extent of 90 percent, while the percentage in *Doaba* and *Majha* may be taken at 80 percent. The situation in urban areas is much better but not more than 50 percent. This has no relationship with the situation prevailing in other parts of India, where the Sikh population is mainly urban. However, the wind of apostasy is blowing rather forcefully, with some variations.

The situation in the diaspora is not much better, with the wind of modernisation and discrimination against Sikh *swaroop*, with beard and turban, being in vogue. The main Sikh concentrations are in USA and Canada in North America, UK and Europe, East Africa, Gulf, South-east Asia and Australia. The Indian Intelligence Agencies are operating in strength in Europe, UK, Canada and to a lesser extent in USA, under the garb of stemming the tide of militancy—which was a creation of its own to keep its presence. At many of these places, the agents of Indian intelligence are operating Gurudwara set ups and social organizations, to cause hindrance to genuine Sikh organisations and disrupt them.

The situation in India is not much better. A number of set ups in Punjab and Delhi are fully under the control of intelligence set ups while some are openly oriented to one Hindu political set up or the other, namely Congress, BJP/Hindutava forces. The communists, Janta Dals and other local set ups are fellow travellers. The SAD(Badal) in Punjab, who are mastering the SGPC, are in the forefront as collaborators of BJP. The various *Jathedars* in and outside Punjab are said to be in regular receipt of grants/payment from Hindutava forces, without any contradictions. The *Jathedars* in Punjab are playing a subservient role. They are far away from Sikhism.

This is high time that a secular party like SAD (Badal) should be absolved of having any say in SGPC. Earlier the two so called secular parties, Congress and Communist Party shed their participation in SGPC polls, only after they had infiltrated into Sant Fateh Singh Akali Dal. Then, they milched it, with nominee from one of them remaining its President for over quarter of a century.

The Government of India has a plan to have a major say in the Sikh affairs. The revival of All India Gurudwara Act, which was put in cold storage in 1999, is one pointer. If such a thing happens; it will be the first case of its kind, wherein shrines of a section of people are put under control

of the government, as against shrines of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and others. The second pointer could be the scheme to place so called *Dasam Granth* at par with *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, at the third centenary celebrations, which are very much on line, at Hazur Sahib. Already, as in the case of Punjab and Delhi, under the aegis of semi-literate *Sant-Babas*, historical artifacts delineating Sikh cultural heritage have been obliterated and replaced by thousands of crores rupees of lifeless mono-style marble from Rajasthan mines in historical Gurudwaras, and this is being repeated now at Hazur Sahib. The Sikh people have not gained by raising prolific-looking Sikh shrines at the cost of their cultural heritage. The third pointer is grant of Z Class security to Baba Ram-Rahim, despite CBI's putting charges of murder, rape, rapine etc. against him, and suggestions to Badal to go slow for fear of Central rule in Punjab. CBI has already taken very long to pursue the case against the Baba, as he was used for political, anti-Sikh purposes, by the Union government.

All this is *bipran ki reet*, against which Guru Gobind Singh warned the Sikhs so pointedly. It was for the *Jathedar* of *Akal Takhat* to take the corrective action, which he has not taken. The SGPC has recently been exposed for publishing some works on Sikh history and philosophy which excel in ridiculing the Sikh Gurus and the word (*Sabad*) in lurid terms. The malaise has gone very deep. In the words of Bhai Gurdas, if a mother starts giving poison to her son, who can protect him. It is obvious that this institution of SGPC has failed in its mission, or has rather been hijacked by Sikh looking *bipars*.

What is need of the hour is to put the mission of Guru Nanak on its wheels in its purity. Our emphasis on *sarbat da bhall*, (the welfare of all) does not mean that we should sacrifice our ideology and go into the lap of the evil. The concept of *sarbat da bhall*, signifies welfare of all meaningful forces.

I do not know what is in the scheme of the Government of India, headed at the moment by Congress, and may be tomorrow by BJP or some divergent combinations. What is needed is for all well meaning Sikhs to put their heads together and ensure that philosophical parameters set by Guru Nanak, are not violated. We should combine to guard against the forces which, in the name of Sikhism, are out to corrupt and mutilate that mission. We may look at what has happened to Islam, Christianity and Buddhism, and how their puritanical doctrines have been distorted. *Biparwad* is itself

a plethora of divergences espousing various contradictions, but the oncoming of Arabs in 8th century gave it a unity by terming all those living across Indus as Hindus— which in Persian language dictionary means Thief, Highwayman, Slave, etc. There are two judgements by Lahore and Chandigarh High Courts explicating the subject. Let us hope that the Sikhs realise their place in history, and stick to Guru Nanak's pristine mission.

Another aspect that needs immediate commendation is the concept of universal humanism of Guru Nanak. If we all are children of One God, how could it be that some are high, others low, and still lower, or outcastes. Guru Nanak said, 'ਨੀਚਾ ਅੰਦਰ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤ, ਨੀਚੀ ਹੂ ਅਤੀ ਨੀਚ, ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਨਕੈ ਸੰਗ ਸਾਥ, ਵਡਿਆਂ ਸਿਉਂ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸ' (*nicha andar nich jaat, nichi hu ati nich, Nanak tinkai sang sath, wadian sio kia rees*) that he was with lowest of the low, i.e. outcastes. In similar vein Guru Gobind Singh said, 'ਇਨ ਗਰੀਬ ਸਿਖਨ ਹਉਂ ਦਿਉਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ, ਯਾਦ ਕਰੋਂ ਇਹ ਮੇਰੀ ਗੁਰਿਆਈ' (*in garib Sikhian haun dion patshahi, yad karen ih meri Guriayee*) (I give these poor, low Sikhs the rulership of the land, so that they remember my term as Guru). Significantly, Guru Gobind Singh had affixed his plum, *kalgi*, on a so-called backward Sikh, and the head of Guru Tegh Bahadur was taken by Bhai Jaita, another such person, from Delhi to Anandpur, who was termed as Guru's son.

It were the forces of Khalsa led by Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, and consisting of so-called scum of society that established the Sikh rule, and showed that the atrocious Mughal government was not irresistible. It were the Sikhs from the lower section who were flag bearers of *Dal Khalsa* in 18th century. It was unfortunate that under the *Misls* and later under Ranjit Singh, the lower classes, though continued to be in the armed forces, lost their primacy because of *bipar*, Brahmanical influence exercised through *Udasis*, *Nirmalas* and others. It was the issue of baptism of these classes and acceptance of their *prasad* at Darbar Sahib that ushered in the Gurudwara Reform Movement, that brought such a revolution in the Sikh society. It is unfortunate that SGPC established in 1925, failed to pick up the threads of the unique course. Let us not forget our history. We must understand that in 18th century, Jats, Ramgarhias, *Sansis*, Ahluwalias etc. all fell within the framework of backward classes. Under the *Misls* and the Sikh rule there has been upward social mobility. If presently, so-called backward classes, who had established their rule in Naraingarh area, had been accepted as such by the English in 19th century along with *Phoolkian*

states, they also would have moved up in social hierarchy. These are quirks of history and we should not fall a victim to that.

To begin with, let us decide to drop our castes from our names, so as not to let anyone know who one is, and to which class one comes from. Let all be Sikhs or Gursikhs. As Guru Nanak said, 'ਸੁਭ ਅਮਲਾਂ ਬਾਝੋਂ ਦੋਨੋਂ ਰੋਈ' (*Shub amlan bajhon dowai roee*) without good deeds, no one will find acceptance in the Court of God. Let our deeds speak and be supreme, rather than the so-called high or low castes.

We need a force of dedicated people well versed in Sikh theology and philosophy to come forth and do *dharm parchar* amongst us to put us on the rails.

'But', and it remains a big but, what should we do with the present system of five *Takhats* and their *Jathedars*? It is commonly said that *Akal Takhat* is supreme. So let it be. But what is the position of its *Jathedar*? Was the *Jathedar* supreme when *Akal Takhat* was occupied by *Minas* from 1635 to 1699? Was *Jathedar* supreme when the British appointed the *Jathedar* from around 1849 to 1920? Is present *Jathedar*, who cannot take action against *biprical* Sikhs, supreme? Our Gurudwaras and Darbar Sahib have been under occupation of hostile forces. Look at what Massa Ranghar did to Darbar Sahib? Keeping that in view, should we not take the present situation in its proper perspective?

In my work, *The Sikhs in History*, (now having both Punjabi and Hindi versions, also), I had mentioned that by middle of 21st century (when the people of my generation and the next-one pass away), the Sikhs in North America (USA & Canada), and UK—Europe shall assume a position of primacy in Sikhism, because of sharp fall in numbers of practicing Sikhs in Punjab, which will have its impact on other parts of India as well. I wish, I am proved wrong.

We may now take into view the importance of media in our lives. One TV Channel is now providing *Kirtan* from Darbar Sahib in the morning and evening, at fixed hours. Another channel has started telecasting from Gurudwara Bangla Sahib, but is not that widespread at the moment. There are several other channels who provide regular timings for telecasting the discourses of Sikh *deradars*, and the scenes show that they are doing very good business. They, some times, talk relevant, but mostly irrelevant things, that suits the *bipar*. Why can't SGPC start a channel of its own? Some time Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa suggested the same. We must have *Katha*, expositions of Sikh history, culture and philosophy, besides theology. We

must lower marble structures for our Gurudwaras and sumptuous *langars* to those who don't need it. Of more importance is provision of education to the Sikh children, laced with *gur-maryada* and basic principles.

The Hindu imperialism, of which we have been the victims now, has completed six decades. Earlier we had the British imperialism that could not complete two centuries. Before that we had Mughal Empire which during less than two centuries, from Babur to Aurangzeb, started tilting. Hindu imperialism is already facing terrorism (sometimes, of its own creation) in Kashmir, Chhatisgarh, Bihar, Himachal, Uttaranchal, U.P., Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, all of North-east, besides Maharashtra and parts of Karnataka. The only terror-free areas shown to be are Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat, MP., Tamilnadu and Kerala (See, *Sunday Pioneer* of September 9, 2007). A recent study, conducted by the United Nations and published in India this month, has cast aspersions on the ability of Hindu imperialism to face the terrorist onslaught. But we must understand that even if the *Bipar* rule lasts for a century or so, the Sikhs, as presently constituted, will not be able to out live that. It is, therefore, hightime for younger generations to take up the work to rejuvenate Guru Nanak's mission with vigour and intelligence.

Lastly, we must follow the Jews who despite having undergone worst type of persecution, have not only survived but also established a state, and also emerged as a major factor in America's socio-political set up. The first atom bombs thrown at Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States were prepared by the Jews. The Jews have also dominated the Noble Prizes offered by the Hague Academy because of their achievements. Guru Nanak had laid emphasis on the use of (*aql-ਅਕਲ*) human intelligence, in the conduct of human affairs. He wanted us to use our intelligence in understanding the nature of God (as against plethora of god and goddesses), in our understanding of our surroundings or every day life, and in our munificence; these were the correct methods, all else was Satanic (*SGGS*, p.1245). The Sikhs shall have to discard their sluggardness, and firstly, reach that level of intellectual achievement, and secondly, remain faithful to the Sikh religion and philosophy, and their distinct identity which, however, as yet not been the case. The Sikhism is already in doldrums in Punjab, the place of its origin.

1857 : THE CRISIS AT PESHAWAR

*Bir Good Gill**

The population on the North-West Frontier region had a long history of restlessness. Peshawar was extracted from the Ghazis by daring Sikh Army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in March 1823. After the precious victory even the 'prudent Maharaja' had noticed the hostile spirit of the people and therefore had accepted Yar Mohammad's tender of submission.¹ Sir John Lawrence, too was fully aware of the temperament of the population of Peshawar. This region, after annexation, with hostile tribes on three sides, was greatest source of anxiety to him. He noted this unruly trait of the people, 'Peshawar is unlike any other place ... all the people have been robbers and murderers from their cradles. It is not a section of the people with whom we have to deal; it is the whole mass'.²

It was this mass of 60,000 which added to the British worry—the worry that the inhabitants had never been disarmed even at the time of annexation like the people of the Punjab proper. This concession was given to them to guard against the trans-border raids which were quite frequent in the valley. During the crisis of 1857 that concession turned into biggest danger to the British interests.

The whole of North-West Frontier was ablaze with the spirit of rebellion throughout the months of May, June, July, August and September of 1857. The authorities were fully aware that if Peshawar was gone, Punjab was gone and with that everything was gone. Peshawar was considered the keystone of the arch of defence. "A shaft here, or a column there, might be broken or displaced, and the fabric still stand; but the keystone gone, the arch would collapse and all become a wreck".³

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1. J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, Lahore, 1849 (Reprint, 1966), p. 146.
2. R. Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence*, London, 1883, (2 Vols.), Vol II, p. 412.
3. J. Cave Browne, *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857*, London, 1861 (2 Vols.), (reprint 1970), Vol. I, p.138.

On the night of 11 May an unofficial telegram reached Peshawar with a message that sepoys from Meerut had arrived at Delhi and were burning houses and killing the Europeans. The news was confirmed on 12 May when a second message dated midnight of 10 May came from Major Waterfield, Deputy Adjutant-General of Meerut. This left no doubt that the native troops were in 'open mutiny' and "the European troops under arms defending barracks"⁴. The authorities at Peshawar were panicstruck and instantaneously started arranging for means of defence.

John Nicholson, the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, proposed to Lt. Colonel H.B. Edwardes, the Commissioner and Superintendent of Peshawar Division for the formation of Moveable Column which would help them, put down rebellion in the Punjab if it occurred. In the afternoon of 12 May itself Brigadier Sydney Cotton, the Commander of Peshawar Brigade, Major General Reed, Commander of Peshawar Division, Lt. Colonel H.B. Edwardes and John Nicholson settled down and formed Council of war. The Council immediately started working on the formation of Moveable Column in anticipation of approval from Chief Commissioner, Sir John Lawrence. They intensified their work when the next morning a telegraphic message came from Chief Commissioner telling the delicate state of affairs at Lahore and the disarming of native troops at Mian Meer. The Chief Commissioner who could see the danger ahead, had also approved of the proposed Moveable Column.⁵ This telegram had reached at 10.30 A.M. on 13 May and sensing the urgency the Council of war gathered at General Reed's residence half an hour later. It was decided to create as quickly as possible the Moveable Column of thoroughly reliable troops that would 'put down mutiny wherever it might appear in the Punjab.' The message was quickly telegraphed to Chief Commissioner and to all the British officers commanding every station in the Punjab.⁶

The 64th N.I. which they suspected could rebel anytime, was divided into three parts on the vain pretext that a raid was expected from Mohammedans on the border. This regiment was divided into small detachments to break its strength. Lt. Colonel H.B. Edwardes noted that it

4. *Mutiny Records Reports*, Vol. VIII (2 parts), Govt. Publications, Lahore, 1911, Part II, p. 134. (hereafter as *MRR*).

5. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

6. *Mutiny Records Correspondence*, Vol. VII (2 parts), Govt. Publications, Lahore, 1911, Part I, p. 33. (hereafter as *MRC*); also, *MRR*, Part II, p. 136.

was thus 'crippled for intrigue, whether in its own ranks or with other regiments'.⁷ This was the first move of the British authorities at Peshawar which could foretell the sepoys about the British designs in the Peshawar region.

The next step that the officials took was to keep a check on the post offices. This was important as all the letters to the sepoys from their friends and families came through the post. Orders were issued for the strict examination of all the sepoys' letters and to withhold any information that was considered dangerous to the British interests.⁸

On 16 May, a lithographed circular by Captain Bartlett, the Cantonment Magistrate, was issued to native troops. The circular was in the native dialect and it appealed to the sepoys to side with the British during the crisis.⁹

After making all these initial arrangements the authorities of Peshawar settled down to work on the Moveable Column. The Chief Commissioner was so convinced with the usefulness of the proposed column that he gave permission even to raise 2000 Multani Horses.¹⁰

With all these stringent measures the authorities still admitted that the 'matters were growing worse each day'. Soon after, on 18 May, the news reached the headquarters that 55th N.I., both stationed at Naushehra and Mardan was 'in a state of discontent'.¹¹ To add to the worry was the news by Colonel Nicholson that 10th irregular Cavalry at Naushehra 'showed signs of disaffection'. Both the cavalry regiments at Naushehra and at Peshawar were not to be relied on.¹² The 64th N.I. too contributed to their tension where on 20 May seditious letters were intercepted from Mohammedans in Patna and Thanesar to Naik Karimullah and other soldiers of 64th N.I. After narrating the state of affairs there these letters contained messages from their own mothers that they (soldiers of 64th N.I.) should fight the British might and in the process if they fell they would be received in heaven and their deaths would be pleasant news at home. Karimullah was hanged.¹³

The atmosphere was charged with tensions in the region. *Sadhus* and

7. *MRR*, Part II, p.135.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

10. *Foreign Department, Secret Branch, Cons. 21, 26 June 1857*, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

11. *MRR*, Part II, p. 140.

12. *Foreign Department, Secret Branch, Cons. 21, 26 June 1857*, N.A.I., New Delhi.

13. *MRR*, Part II, p. 141.

faqirs were seen loitering in Peshawar valley a little too often. On 19 May a *faqir* was caught with bag of forty six new rupees. Besides, a small bag carrying a note written in Persian was found concealed cleverly in the hollow of his armpit. The note read that, 'On the day of the *Eid*, you must come here; and if it be easy, bring a few pounds of fruit with you. Now is the time; admit no fear into your heart. Such an opportunity will not again occur. Set out at once. I enjoin you'. It was signed by Fakir Mullah Naseem'.¹⁴ The few pounds of fruit were translated by Nicholson as 'British officers' heads'. It is for sure the writer of the letter used a factitious identity but contents made it clear that there were plans going on for collective rise on the occasion of *Eid* which was supposed to fall on 25th or 26th of May. Nicholson was of the opinion that this letter was from Muhammedans in the garrison to the Muhammedans at the outposts inviting them for collective rebellion. The news was in the air that Muhammedans of the city and valley too were ready to rise and help the sepoys.¹⁵ If such a rising had taken place, the British at Peshawar knew there could be no escape. The memories of what happened at Kabul a couple of decades ago during the first Anglo-Afghan War, when the whole of British army was annihilated were still fresh in their minds. The 'cause was desperate' and so it was admitted. The British at Peshawar felt that it was not easy at this juncture even to raise hundred new people who would fight on the British side.¹⁶

Despite the best arrangements by the authorities at Peshawar the chain of rebellion had started on 12 May itself. The 55th N.I. detachment which was on duty at the ferry point on the river Indus, challenged officer on duty, Lt. Lind, loaded their guns and marched towards Naushehra to raise their companions there. Enroute they were joined by another detachment of 24th N.I. which had been escorting commissariat stores to Peshawar. The latter abandoned the job and pushed on to Naushehra together with 55th N.I. sepoys.¹⁷ The news reached Nicholson. Promptly these sepoys were disarmed and brought to Naushehra as prisoners to create an impact on their allies. The 55th N.I. regiment at Naushehra was fully ready to join their comrades and the plan was made in collaboration and with commitment. It is obvious from the point that when the sepoys at Naushehra saw their

14. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *MRC*, Part I, pp. 59 60; also, *MRR*, Part II, p. 145.

friends brought as prisoners, they got infuriated. They broke out and fired at the *sowars* who had been escorting the prisoners. The *sowars* were dispersed. The 55th N.I. detachment at Naushehra joined their friends and together they were more strengthened for their cause. They broke open the regimental magazine, took away the ammunition and rushed to bridge of boats to cross the Kabul river. They were to join main body of 55th N.I. posted at the fort of Mardan, twelve miles from Naushehra. When they found the bridge broken (The news reached Lt. F.S. Taylor, the British engineer at the post who had hurriedly broken the bridge.) they did not lose heart and flung themselves in the boats and reached the other side of the bank. It has been recorded in the British accounts that 10th Irregular Cavalry which was posted there did not stop them.¹⁸ Sir John Lawrence had noted this with deep concern in his letter to Lord Canning on May 29 that native cavalry had all the sympathy with the sepoys at Peshawar.¹⁹ This had happened at Naushehra and at Mardan and this was their biggest danger.

At this point the ultimate fear of the authorities was that if 55th N.I. possessed the fort, the news would be taken by all the sepoys at Peshawar as a signal for a rise. The authorities had to act promptly before this could happen. The only way left to them was to disband the whole of the native army at Peshawar. On the morning of the 22 May before the body of rebelled 55th N.I. could arrive, one of the largest disbanding of native army took place. At Peshawar 51st N.I., 24th N.I., 27th N.I., along with 5th Light Cavalry all were disbanded by Brigadier Cotton.²⁰ 'Peshawar was saved' to their ultimate relief. The absent sepoys at the time of disarming were labeled as 'deserters' and the punishment for the latter according to Act XIV was death. Later on, despite the threat of capital punishment, the disarmed sepoys of 51st N.I. escaped in large groups.²¹

The catastrophe was not yet over when another struck the British. On 23 May, the news reached them that 55th N.I. at Mardan was in a state of 'mutiny'. They threatened to 'roast Lt. Horne', the Assistant Commissioner at Mardan. The 55th N.I. broke free from the fort and rebelled. They could not be caught even with the best of chase by artillery, cavalry and infantry

18. *MRC*, Part I, p.58.

19. Bosworth Smith, *op.cit.*, p.69.

20. *MRC*, Part I, pp. 65-66.,

21. *Ibid.*, p.71.

forces. Four hundred sepoys safely reached Swat.²² The people of border valley of Loond Khor helped them in their escape.²³ There were reasons to believe that Swat and neighbouring valley had been planning since long to help the sepoys of 55th N.I. and 64th N.I.

The events took another serious turn when Colonel Chester was killed at Delhi and Brigadier General Chamberlain was called to the high post of Adjutant-General in the beginning of July. Chamberlain was thus replaced by Colonel Nicholson as the Commander of Punjab Moveable Column. He was given the rank of Brigadier-General. In Nicholson's place Captain H.R. James, the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner joined as Deputy Commissioner at Peshawar. The mounting pressure at Delhi was resulting in the exodus of British soldiers to that destination.

The people of Peshawar could see the British hold on the valley getting weakened. They, therefore, started making fresh plans of rebellion. In the border village of Narinji which was situated at the hill top with a population so restless and unruly that the police never dared to visit the place even during normal times. It was believed that special messengers had come from Delhi and proclaimed the extinction of the *Nazaranas* in the Mughal Capital. The Gazis were invited to descend and inflame the whole of Peshawar region. It was reported that a Maulvi had raised the banner of holy war. It worried the Deputy Commissioner, Captain H. R. James so much that he himself along with Major Vaughan and 1400 soldiers went Narinji on 3 August to check the outburst.²⁴ It was admitted that '30 of the Ghazees died fighting stoutly'. Lt. Colonel Edwardes later on wrote in his report, 'The village was knocked down by elephants and its towers blown up by the engineers. Nowrunjee was at last destroyed'.²⁵

Problems still abounded in Peshawar. Despite the strict supervision arms were finding their way into the native army lines. General Cotton had received the news that there were 'symptoms of an organized rise' in every regiment. On 28 August, he ordered to search simultaneously every line of every native regiment. The sepoys were moved out in the tents. All sorts of arms—swords, hatchets, pistols, bayonets, powder, ball and caps were found stacked in roofs, in the floors and beddings. So much so that these were

22. *Foreign Department, Secret Branch, Cons. 15, 28 August 1857, N.A.I., New Delhi.*

23. *MRR, Part II, p.152.*

24. *Ibid.*, p. 166.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

even piled up in the drains. Desperate struggle followed. In that out of 871 sepoy 660 were killed while others were taken as captives.²⁶ What could be the fate of these prisoners need not be repeated. The fact that they rose and they challenged the British might, irrespective of consequences, that was the achievement.

On 9 September, Syed Ameen from Khyber along with forty to fifty escaped soldiers of 51st N.I. made a night attack on the fort of Michni. It was feared that if the gates were opened the command of the frontier would have been lost. It was so because there were no sufficient guards to defend the fort. The Commissioner of Peshawar noted, "We had no troops to move out against them. It was a time for yielding with as good a grace as could be assumed". Therefore, offer was made to the Muhammedans to send back the leader to Kabul and make peace. When that 'passing crisis' would be over they would be rewarded sufficiently. Lt. Colonel Edwardes admits 'The relief was undescrivable'.²⁷ The catastrophe had been avoided for the time being.

With the mounting pressures from Delhi, Peshawar was denuded of the best of the English soldiers. With the people of Peshawar excited, native infantry in open rebellion and Irregular Cavalry doubtful, the situation was hopeless for the British. In Peshawar they were living day to day and were buying time at all costs and by all means. The assault of Delhi on 14 September was their last desperate move. Had that failed, the train of rebellion could have been steamed off at Peshawar engulfing whole of the Punjab and further on, with dire consequences for the British.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 174-175.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 177-178.

GOLDEN TEMPLE AND THE STATE DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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The 18th century had two significant legacies for Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. First, the city of Amritsar and the Darbar Sahib or Golden Temple—as the Europeans would call it—had emerged as the centre of Sikh religious, cultural and political activities. The students of Sikh political history are familiar with this development.¹ There is no need to elaborate this point. Secondly, there was great increase in the properties and wealth of the Temple. A major cause of this prosperity was that the Sikh devotees (pilgrims) and the Sardars of Khalsa (*Misldars*) could, and did, make visits as well as 'offerings' i.e. *bhet/ardas* more openly, more easily and richly due to the establishment of Sikh rule.² The 'offerings' could be in cash or in form. It varied from a meagre offering by an ordinary faithful to a fat gift in cash or land grant by a Sardar (military/territorial chief). It was made to *Guru*

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1. The general histories of the Punjab as well as the Sikhs deal with this development in detail. See, Teja Singh Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs* (rpt), Patiala, 1994, pp. 110-111, 115, 117, 119, 128, 160, 172; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.III, Munshiram Manohar Lal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., pp.1992, pp. 46-47, 58-59, 63, 80, 87-93, 100; Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol.I, Oxford, 2004, pp. 121-22, 126, 141, 145-46; and Bhagat Singh, *A History of the Sikh Misls*, Patiala, 1993, p.341.
2. Written in 1972, an article of Ganda Singh, entitled 'Sirhind in the Eighteenth Century' showed the link between the rising Sikh power in the Punjab and the deepening sentiment of loyalty and devotion to Darbar Sahib in the hearts of the Sardars of Khalsa. It has been reported that the Sardars of *Dal Khalsa* occupied Sirhind in 1764 and "most of the booty that fell into the hands of the Sikhs was given away in donation for the repair and reconstruction of Hari Mandir—the Darbar Sahib of Amritsar which had been desecrated and destroyed by Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1762". Fourteen lac rupees collected on this occasion were sent to Amritsar. See, Fauja Singh (ed.), *Sirhind Through the Ages*, Patiala, 1972, p.113.

Granth or the reader of the Holy Book.³ In fact, the term Darbar Sahib stood for the *Granth Sahib* as well as Harmandir Ji that was fastly growing into a huge complex of institutions.⁴

The British revenue records show that the earliest *dharmarth* to Darbar Sahib was made in the year 1784 A.D.⁵ The Sukerchakias had entered the donor's list before the end of the century. The first *dharmarth* made by them to this temple occurred either in 1790 or 1793. It came from Sardar Mahan Singh. Later on, Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his nobility made many more land and cash grants. Also, the Maharaja confirmed the existing ones.

Historians of Maharaja Ranjit Singh have shown at length as to how his bounty or patronage to the temple was boundless.⁶ According to W. Hamilton, the Maharaja and his house upto 1828 had donated gold alone of the worth of rupees 6,41,000, to the Temple. There is no need to repeat it here. Yet it must be noticed that the patronage was in accordance with the traditions of the Indian classical polity which maintained that there were two essential attributes of a noble king viz., patronage and protection to the institutions of religious and public use. The Maharaja was true to this classical tradition in word and deed. The Temple was well protected and patronized after 1805, the year that witnessed the conquest and unification of Amritsar

3. *A History of the Sikhs* by Khushwant Singh records how Adina Beg Khan supported by the Sikhs in his battle of Mahilpur (Hoshiarpur district) against Afghans in December 1757 tried to ingratiate himself with the Khalsa 'by offering a thousand rupees to the *Granth*'. This amount was in addition to 'the protection money' of rupees one lac paid to the Khalsa for sparing Jalandhar (Vol. I, p.146).
4. The British found Darbar Sahib comprising of 'Golden Temple and its three Colleges'. It meant (1) Hari Mandirjee (2) Akal Bunga (3) Jhanda Bunga and (4) Shahid Bunga, see Nazer Singh, 'Early British Attitude Towards the Golden Temple', *Journal of Regional History*, Vol.III, 1982, p.88.
5. The scholars of Sikh history are yet to pay attention to these properties. For a quick look on them one can see John Lawrence's Letter dated 10 June 1853, making 'General Remarks on the *Jagirs* held in religious grants in the support of Darbar Sahib', in, *Political Proceedings*, no 217, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
6. See, Madanjit Kaur, *The Golden Temple : Past and Present*, G.N.D.U., Amritsar, 1982, *passim*. Also, the special issue of *The Panjab Past and Present* on 'Golden Temple' brought out by the Punjabi University in 1999, *passim*. This second work will be referred thereafter as *Golden Temple* (1999).

city by him. Significantly Phula Singh Akali aided him in this venture.⁷

Further, it need be stressed that Ranjit Singh's patronage took different forms and it was related to his personal and political state. One of these forms was his visits to the Golden Temple.⁸ Even a hurriedly made catalogue of these visits would show how these visits were personal as well as royal or official. The visits were small in numbers during the earlier years of his rule i.e. the signing of Amritsar Treaty with the British in April 1809. But the visits began to grow as the kingdom grew in size and military strength and came in this way in touch with the active non-Sikh powers. The increase in the Golden Temple visits of the Maharaja were noticeable by 1818. Moreover, the visits became numerous a year by the early 1830's. Sohan Lal Suri's *Twārikh* makes an interesting reading of these visits.⁹ Every visit fetched *dan* to or at the Temple.¹⁰

To begin with, the Maharaja used to pay a visit to Darbar Sahib either on the days of festivals such as the *maghi*, *baisakhi*, *dushehra* or *diwali*. Also, he visited the Temple to celebrate a victory made by his armies. On such visits he used to make a dip in the *sarowar* and distribute alms (*dan*)

7. Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh Maharaja of the Punjab*, Penguin Books, 2001, pp. 55-56.

8. No Sikh scholar have taken notice of these visits so far. It must be said that the visits were part of the patronage policy, though the patronage to the temple was much larger than the offerings made during these visits. For the political aspect of the patronage one can rely upon Gyani Bhajan Singh's book in Punjabi entitled *Sri Harimandir Sahib* (Chandigarh : 1999). How some of these visits particularly during the 1830's were personally and politically crucial, can also be seen from Hari Ram Gupta's *History of the Sikhs* (Vol. V, 1991), pp. 208, 294-97.

We took a notice of these visits and made a brief of them in 2001. See, Nazer Singh, 'Sri Harimandir Sahib Te Maharaja Ranjit Singh' (Pbi.), *Proceedings of Punjab History Conference*, Patiala, 2002, pp. 76-82.

9. *Daftar Two* and Three of Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* are directly relevant. *Daftar two* was consulted by us in Punjabi as translated and published by Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, in 1995. *Daftar Three* was used as translated by V. S. Suri and reprinted at Chandigarh in 1984. Hereafter, these two *Dafstars* will be referred by their number.

10. See, *Daftar Two*, pp. 74, 91, 106, 120, 147, 157, 194, 212, 231, 241, 253, 320, 337, 348, 364, 368, 375, 378, 386, 395, 412, 425, 445, 487; and *Daftar Three*, pp. 16-17, 22-25, 29, 33, 53, 58, 65, 72-75, 77-78, 82, 110, 150, 137, 148, 171, 183, 201-202, 247-48, 252, 269, 289, 305-06, 335, 347, 374, 376, 379, 397, 418-19, 429, 440, 465, 496, 500, 525-26, 530, 557, 586-87, 589, 591-93, 596, 623, 635, 637, 642, 647.

to the poor and the needy. Invariably, he did make a *nazar* or *bhet* to *Guru Granth* and the *Akal Bunga*. These were thanks-giving visits that could and did cover the happy moments/opportunities falling in the Maharaja's way such as the birth of prince Sher Singh or his own recovery from illness or anxiety caused by the stress. We know that by 1818, the Maharaja's general health had begun to show a downward trend.¹¹ It might have increased his faith in the power of Darbar Sahib to heal men. Hence the increase in visits to the temple and the richer alms to it by him.

Quite different from these thanks-giving visits to the Temple were the ones made by Maharaja in response to the visits undertaken to the same place by the British diplomatic and political missions. The missions had a history of their own. Under Lord Wellesley the East India Company (1798-1805) was aware of the significance of Amritsar for the Sikh polity and for its own empire's defence from the North-West. This awareness could be seen from the presence of a British *vaganawis* in Amritsar as early as in 1799. We know that Yussif Ali (Incharge of the Company's first diplomatic mission to the Sikhs) and Ranjit Singh had secret talks in Amritsar at the dawn of the 19th century.¹² Further, John Malcolm visited Golden Temple in the wake of Holkar episode (1805-06). Holkar himself had paid a visit to the Temple to gather Sikh support for his cause.¹³ Darbar Sahib was not only visited by Charles Metcalfe before signing the Amritsar Treaty but he had also brought this Temple to the notice of Governor-General. Metcalfe made an attempt to appease the Temple priests by making an offerings nay by spending rupees 2605/- in the complex.

In 1827, Wade visited the temple.¹⁴ By the times of William Bentick (1828-35) and Lord Auckland (1836-42) Golden Temple stood fully entered the Anglo-Sikh diplomacy. In 1831 Burnes and in 1836 B. Hugel visited the shrine. On his visit in 1838, Lord Auckland spent rupees 11,250 in the Golden Temple.¹⁵ Emily Eden, a sister of the Governor General, also visited the Temple and examined its gold plating.

Little wonder if the Maharaja's visits to this shrine during the 1830's became more frequent and grand. His expenditure spent in and on the Temple

11. See, Nazer Singh, 'Sri Harimandir Sahib', *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.

12. Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh, op.cit.*, p.45.

13. See, *Daftar Two*, pp. 67-69; Also Hari Ram Gupta, *History* (V), p.208.

14. Wade donated Rs. 500/- to the Akal Bunga, *Daftar Two*, p.425.

15. *Daftar Three*, p.588.

beautification increased many a fold.¹⁶ The hours spent in Temple increased because the places to be visited were no longer Harmandir and Akal Bunga. These included *dukhbhanjani*, Gharryali Bunga, and Baba Atal. The Sukerchakia Bunga was recasted so that it could accommodate the Maharaja and serve as a Darbar or resting place for the ageing man while on visit to the Temple.¹⁷ The *dan* in Darbar Sahib covered, apart from the *Granthis* and *Rababbis*, the Brahmans and Nihangs/Akalis. The Akalis and Brahmans sometimes vied with each other for the royal charity. There were complaints that the *dan* made by the Maharaja was not reaching the really poor and the needy.¹⁸

How were the wealth and properties of the Golden Temple managed before 1849 ? What happened to the property of this institution after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839 ? It is not easy to answer these questions. However, a few points can be made with certainty.

After 1805 A.D. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was the sole protector but not the sole patron of the Golden Temple. No *Misl* including the *Misl Shahida* had anything to do with its protection. Further, the issue of protection in the 19th century had a different bearing. It came to mean 'peace' at the Temple. It meant the shrine was to be protected from the forces within.¹⁹ Upto 1839, these forces were the Nihangs/Akalis²⁰, though under Phula Singh they had joined hands with Ranjit Singh. They were not opposed to Maharaja Ranjit Singh's policy of patronage and protection to the Temple. But they showed, at times, dissatisfaction with his rule within and outside the Temple without questioning his right to rule. The overthrow or dislodging was never

16. See, Nazer Singh, 'Sri Harimandir Sahib', *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

18. See, *Daftar Two*, p. 455.

19. *Daftar two* of *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* records that Maharaja Ranjit Singh changed his officials in Darbar Sahib. Bhai Sant Singh was found incapable of ensuring that offerings made to the temple should reach the needy and to those who were really intended to reach by the donors including the Maharaja. He was replaced by Bhai Ram Singh and Bhai Gobind Ram the two sons of Bhai Harbhaj Rai. The new appointees were to distribute *dan* properly, and maintain the accounts of the Temple income correctly. It happened in 1828 A.D., See *Daftar Two*, p. 455.

20. Even before the death of Phula Singh in 1823, the Akalis/Nihangs were found unhappy with the government of Ranjit Singh. In 1812 Phula Singh Akali demanded more from the Temple charity and actually fought for this with 'the Akalis of Darbar Sahib'. See, *Events At the Court of Ranjit Singh* (rpt.), Language Deptt. Punjab, 1988, pp. 51-52.

dared. In fact, they did ask for a better deal for themselves once or twice. It was a request/demand for either a greater share in the Temple's income (*Rasad*) or the restoration of what they had been enjoying traditionally. As to their capacity to cause trouble to the British or other alien visitors, the Maharaja and his administration never permitted it to happen by them.²¹ In fact, Sohan Lal Suri had included the Nihangs of Darbar Sahib in the class of mendicants living on charity or the *dan*.

The death of Maharaja in June 1839, however, created a different situation. The challenge to the authority of Lahore kingdom to administer Golden Temple came. But it came from a Sikh *Sant* rather than the Nihangs or the Akalis. The *Sant* was the head of the Naurangabad establishment that had refused to recognize what was called the *Jalha* regime of Hira Singh and his associates as the legitimate ruling authority at the Lahore.²² In turn the Lahore Sarkar saw him and his establishment as 'the rebels', and did not allow the *Sant*, Bhai Vir Singh, to enter Amritsar to bathe in the *sarowar* of Golden Temple. It happened in 1844. The estrangement between the Lahore Sarkar and the Khalsa led to a contest for Golden Temple. Once again the question of 'peace' at the Temple acquired a political aspect to be further sharpened with the arrival of British on the scene after 1845 A.D.

How did Golden Temple face the Lahore Army and its *Panches* acting in the name of Khalsa? It is not clear. But the disturbed polity was not without its impact upon the shrine. The insubordinate soldiers were found forcibly collecting *bhet/ardas* from the devotees entering the Temple to pay their obeisance to *Guru Granth* or for the *Darsan-isnan*.²³ They justified this usurpation by saying that since they were Guru Panth so the offerings must come their way.

The political crises left the priestly section and others formally associated with Temple not very happy with the new situation. There is no evidence to suggest that Maharaja Kharrak Singh or Sher Singh in anyway discontinued

21. In January 1836, Sardar Lehna Singh was ordered to see that the Nihangs or any other mischief-maker must not embarrass Baren Charles Hugel on the latter's visit to Golden Temple, See, *Daftar Three*, p.269.

22. See, Nazer Singh, 'Early British Attitude Towards the Golden Temple', *op.cit.*, p.87.

23. Dr. Kirpal Singh had referred to this development in his article 'A Gurmukhi Source of Ranjit Singh's Times', in, Fauja Singh and A.C.Arora (eds.), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh: Politics, Society and Economy*, Patiala, 1984, p.35.

with the policy of patronage to the Temple.²⁴ Yet the people of Amritsar were found lamenting : they longed for the golden days of the era of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.²⁵

The first Anglo-Sikh war (1846) changed the British relationship with the Temple from the diplomatic sphere to the political/administrative one. The Resident, Henry Lawrence, reduced the daily state allowance made by the Lahore Sarkar to the shrine from rupees 11 to 3¾.²⁶ The allowance was for *Karah prasad* to the temple. John Lawrence incharge of the Jalandhar *doab* won over Makhan Singh, a senior *Granthi* of Golden Temple by confirming to him the *dharmarth* land grants.²⁷ How much influential Makhan Singh was? It could be seen first from the fact that he held *jagirs* in the districts of Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur and Amritsar. Secondly, he was the guru of *Granthi* Jassa Singh. The latter was a *granthi* of Temple since 1832 and was recognized as Head Granthi by the British in 1853. Jassa Singh held this post till his death in 1856.²⁸

The very fact that Golden Temple enjoyed *dharmarth* land grants and these grants were to be either confirmed or resumed by the new rulers made the British after 1849 the sole patron of Golden Temple. We shall return to this issue soon.

The British Resident's concern was not confined to matters of *dharmarth* grants. In February 1848, Sardar Jodh Singh, a *naib-adalti* of Dera Baba Nanak, was transferred to Amritsar.²⁹ Jodh Singh served the British loyally during the second Anglo-Sikh war. He was rewarded by the British and was promoted to the post of *adalti*. In November 1849 he was made Extra Assistant Commissioner of the 3rd grade with a salary of Rs. 300 per month. With the support of men like Bhai Makhan Singh, Bhai Jassa Singh and Sardar Jodh Singh and by the advice of Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia, the British were successful in preserving 'peace' at the Temple. Little wonder that on March 30, 1849, Golden Temple was illuminated to celebrate the annexation of 'Punjab' to the British empire.

24. See, Ganda Singh, *The Punjab in 1839-40*, The Sikh History and Society, Amritsar, 1952, pp. 79, 123, 140, 142, 150, 175, 182; Also, *Daftar Four of Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Chandigarh, 1972, pp. 68-69, 74, 77, 151, 161-78, 250, 275.

25. *Daftar Four*, pp. 166-67.

26. Nazer Singh, 'Early British Attitude Towards the Golden Temple', *op.cit.*, p.88.

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*, p.90.

29. *Ibid.*, p.89.

In 1849 the management of Golden Temple was entrusted to Jodh Singh. The British claimed it was done on the advice of Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia. We know that the Sardar was not in Punjab either in 1848 or in 1849. The appointment of Jodh Singh was justified by the new rulers on the ground that their arrangement was a continuation of the old one. The British argument obviously made Lehna Singh Majithia and Maharaja Ranjit Singh as the custodians of the Golden Temple. Because the British maintained that the Maharaja had entrusted the administration of Golden Temple to Sardar Lehna Singh, and the latter held this assignment till the end of second Anglo Sikh War.

The British argument that the annexation of Punjab did make little difference to the relationship between the Golden Temple and the State was not true. Because the nature of State after 1849 was different. The British administration began to enlist and verify the land grants of the shrine. In 1853 it was estimated that the temple had land grants of the value of rupees 45,000 a year.³⁰ Not all these grants were given by Maharaja Ranjit Singh or the Sikh rulers. Private donations were included in them. While the Sikh Maharaja was one though chief among the several patrons, the British rulers became the sole patrons/custodians because it was their administration that had to decide the fate of the grants and grantees. Further, new terms and conditions were fixed for the confirmation of the grants. For example, the confirmed grantees were explicitly told that they could enjoy the grants till they were loyal to the British. The term used for loyalty was the observance of 'good behaviour'.³¹

The new situation undermined the position of the *granthis*. Under the old system grants could be made to the chief *granthi* of Temple by virtue of his sacred office. He shared these grants with the other *granthis* and functionaries. Also, he received the daily offerings to be distributed among the functionaries of Temple. The new system recognized Jassa Singh as the *chief granthi* but asked him to work through a *panchayat* for the task of distributing the temple income from the grants among the other *granthis*. After Jassa Singh's death, the share of all *granthis* were to be determined forever by the district administration and each share was to be commuted to cash pension payable by the state treasury. Jassa Singh was allowed to enjoy a *dharmarth* of 7058 rupees a year till his life. After his death, a grant

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*, p.90.

of the value of rupees 765 were to be released from this *dharmarth* to the Temple in perpetuity. After 1856, the year of his death, the *granthis* became the pensioners.

In 1853 there were 40 *dharmarth* grants³² in the name of *granthis* of the Temple. Their estimated value was more than rupees 47,000. However, the value of confirmed *dharmarth* grants to them by the British was only rupees 29787.

The Temple functionaries other than the *granthis* also suffered material losses under the new or the colonial regime. The British administration separated the income of the Temple coming from the land and the cash *dharmarths* from the income collected from the daily offerings.³³ Consequently, the functionaries such as the *Mutsaddis* (*pujaris*), the *Rababbis* and the *Raggis* were entitled to share among themselves only the income by the daily *Jharrawa* i.e. offerings by the British. The daily offerings also were not sufficient to give them a regular pay. At the most they got an amount in a year equal to a two month salary actually. This fact of reduction in their incomes was brought to the notice of district administration by Jodh Singh in 1852. Consequently, Cooper, Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, came with a reform in April 1857. He increased the amount paid to them to ensure that they could get money in a year that ought to be equal to their three month pay. Even this did not satisfy the functionaries. In 1859, Cooper noticed that the *Pujaris*, the *Raggis* and the *Rababbis* were not happy with the new system.³⁴

Ian J. Kerr has held the *Pujaris* responsible for the disputes at Golden Temple.³⁵ Due to these disputes about property and income, the British intervened in the temple affairs, he says. Kerr goes a step further and writes that the disputes made the state intervention 'almost proper'. What Kerr has missed was the point that the British administration itself contributed to these disputes. How? Let us see.

In 1853 John Lawrence declared the *dharmarth* land grants as "half-personal".³⁶ The income from the confirmed grants as well from the daily

32. See, John Lawrence, 'General Remarks', *op.cit.*

33. See, 'Translation of Administration paper for the Sikh Temple' (*Dastur-ul-Amal* of 1859), in, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. X, Oct. 1976, pp. 318-19.

34. This whole para is based upon *Dastur-ul-Amal* of 1859.

35. For Kerr's position and criticism, see, Nazer Singh, 'A Critique of Ian J. Kerr's study of British Relations with the Golden Temple, 1849-90', in, *Golden Temple* (1999), pp. 100-108.

36. See, John Lawrence, 'General Remarks', *op.cit.*

offerings had a tendency to become more and more personal and private because both the landed property and wealth of temple was to be shared. Further it was transferable. But there was no clear principle of transfer. In this process the Temple wealth got divided into fractions. This whole exercise was prone to disputes as the share-holders were enlisted and the fractions were fixed by the new regime. The matter was got further complicated because the original *Sanads* in most of the cases were either not available or were, if available, not specific about the objectives of the donors. In such cases it was not easy to determine the *will*. Without a clear *Will*, the British revenue and judicial officers were free to take any view of the *dharmarth* land and cash grants. They often took sides and had a partisan view and made arbitrary decisions in this matter. Jodh Singh, the incharge of the Golden Temple, was an Extra-Assistant Commissioner. He had executive and magisterial powers. There were allegations that he acted in the partisan way. So much so that he often influenced the decisions of the civil courts dealing with the Temple property disputes. On September 20, 1859, R.N.Cust, the Commissioner of the Division, informed his Government thus:³⁷

... I find the courts of law vexed by numerous civil actions for shares or assignments of the offerings made by worshippers at the temple and four subordinate colleges. Power and wealth had produced the usual results, troops of hungry Levites gained their living by the offerings of the faithful, and quarrelled over the division of the unhallowed spoils... The ordinary law of inheritance is not followed, and some times judicial decisions are based on the opinion of the Extra-Assistant-Incharge of the shrine.

The Commissioner, R.N.Cust was, in fact, so unhappy with the situation including the working of Jodh Singh that he had ordered that the official concern with the Temple must be confined to police matters alone i.e. the protection issues. Cust further intended to remove Jodh Singh from the Inchargeship. However, Cust failed in his reform of the Temple management as the Punjab Government refused to abandon its control over the shrine.³⁸

The Punjab administration failed the innovations suggested by Cust. It was done through the *Dastur-ul-amal* of 1859. The circumstances and the

37. Letter of R.N. Cust dated 20 September 1859, in, *Proceedings Home Public, A*, Feb. 1881, nos. 65-71, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

38. See, Nazer Singh, 'Early British Attitude Towards the Golden Temple', *op.cit.*, pp. 91-92.

contents of the *Dastur* have been dealt with by us elsewhere.³⁹ What must be repeated here is that the preparation of the *Dastur* as well its implementation sharpened conflict among the Temple functionaries by deepening factionalism indulged into by the authorities like Extra-Assistant Commissioner, Jodh Singh and the Commissioner, R.N.Cust. The Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, Cooper, who was also the author of *Dastur-ul-Amal*, confessed that a section of the Golden Temple functionaries was reluctant to sign or accept the *Dastur*. We are told that this section was silenced by Cooper who threatened that he had the power to eject any *pujari* or functionary behaving not properly.⁴⁰

The *Dastur-ul-Amal* was a controversial document from its very beginning. As such it was a source of conflict. The ejection clause of the *Dastur* was resented by the functionaries. Because, it was to be exercised by the Incharge of the Temple rechristened as *sarbrah* under the *Dastur*. The *Sarbrah* was Jodh Singh. He had stood by the British during the second Sikh war as well as the mutiny of 1857.⁴¹

Through the *Dastur*, the British dealt with the Golden Temple at two levels. First there was the theoretical level. Secondly, there was the practical side. Theoretically, Golden Temple belonged to Guru Ramdas, though the Khalsa had the right to act as his *chela*, said the Preamble of the *Dastur*.⁴² The *Pujaris* and the other functionaries were wage-earners or the servants. Practically, the Khalsa meant the informal committee of the loyal Sardars. Also, the servants of the Temple had no rights or privileges.

Kerr was right in saying that the *Dastur* was a significant idea i.e. it had a philosophy of its own. This philosophy was to govern not only the relationship between the British and the Golden Temple but also the relations between the Sikhs and the British upto the end of the century. The *Dastur*

39. Ian J.Kerr, 'The British and Administration of the Golden Temple in 1859', *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. X, pt.II, Oct. 1976, pp. 306, 321; Also his articles (1) 'The British Relationships with the Golden Temple', in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 21-22 (1984), pp. 138-51; and "Handle with Great Care' : British Actions Towards the Sikhs and the Golden Temple in the Last Half of the 19th Century", in *Golden Temple, op.cit.*, pp.87-99.

40. Letter of F.Cooper, dt. 15th Sep. 1959, in *Proceedings Home Public*, A, nos. 65-71 (N.A.I.)

41. For Jodh Singh, see Letter of Commissioner of Amritsar, dt. 28 Dec. 1861, in, *Proceedings Foreign General*, B, Feb.1862, nos. 67-69 (N. A.I.).

42. Ian J.Kerr, 'Handle With Great Care', *op. cit.*, p.92.

made it clear that neither the *granthis* and the functionaries of Temple nor the Sikh committee could manage the shrine without the help of the British administration i.e. the *Sarbrah*.⁴³

Further, with the *Dastur* came the idea that Golden Temple was a special case to which the abstract principles such as the notion of religious neutrality must not be applied. It was working on this philosophy that the Punjab administration failed the Act XX of 1863 passed by Govt. of India to dissociate its public servants from the managements of public and religious institutions running on charity by refusing to implement it in the case of Golden Temple. The *Dastur* established the State control over the central Sikh shrine but this control had no legislative sanction behind it. Frankly, it was illegal, though politically desirable for the British. It must be noticed that the year 1863 was the year of making the Gurdwara Reform Movement by Baba Ram Singh Namdhari.⁴⁴

The *Namdhari Lehar* could not achieve much by way of Gurdwara reform or the restoration of Khalsa and its *Rahit*. Yet it broke the British myth that a Sikh resurgence could not take place outside the traditional framework of the Golden Temple. Doing so it showed the path to the Singh Sabha reformers and the other anti-British or nationalist activists.

The Singh reformers were persistent in questioning the British control over Golden Temple because they knew that they were legally and morally right. They were legally right because an Amritsar Court in 1879 decided that the Government appointed *Sarbrah* or manager of the Golden Temple had no legal sanction under the Religious Endowments Act.⁴⁵ Morally, they were justified because the *Dastur* itself had said that Darbar Sahib belonged to the Khalsa.

Before the end of 1885 the reformers openly contested for the *Gaddi* of head-*granthi* of the Golden Temple⁴⁶ because they felt that the head

43. See, Nazer Singh, 'Early British Attitude', *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.

44. For this crisis created by a civil court of Amritsar in 1879, see, *Proceedings Home Public*, A, Feb. 1881, nos. 65-71, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

45. See, Ganda Singh, 'The Singh Sabha and other Socio-Religious Movements in the Punjab (1850-1925)', *The Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. VII, pt. 1, April 1873, pp. 95-96.

46. In 1886 came-out *Khalsa Akhbar* from Lahore. It was in Punjabi and this newspaper took great interest in the affairs of Golden Temple and the issues related to its management including the misuse of its funds by the unaccountable Temple functionaries protected by the British backed *Sarbrah*/Manager of the shrine. See, *Khalsa Akhbar*, Oct. 2, 20, 1886; Dec. 4, 11, 1886; January 1, 15, 1887; Feb. 25, 1887; April 9, 1887; and August 6, 1887.

granthiship had virtually been degenerated into a clerkship⁴⁷ by the British through the *Dastur* and its upholders i.e. loyalist *Sardars* on the Deputy Commissioner led committee of the institution. We are here referring to Bhai Jawahir Singh's claim for the post of head-*granthiship*. Who was Jawahir Singh? Before joining Singh Sabha Lahore, the Bhai was supporter of Swami Dayanand. And it was on the advice of Attar Singh Bhadour that he had shifted his loyalty from Arya Samaj to Singh Sabha. Since 1883, he was a leading member of the Khalsa Diwan. His claim in 1886 to head-*granthiship* was supported by the *Khalsa Akhbar* and *The Tribune*.⁴⁸

The move of making Jawahir Singh as the head of *granthis* did not succeed. Nevertheless it showed that the public bodies like the Khalsa Diwan and Arya Samaj had started taking an active interest in the affairs of Golden Temple. The newspaper began raising a number of issues regarding the Temple. The enlightened individuals and bodies debated through the press the following issues:

1. What kind of a person should occupy the post of head-*granthis* of Golden Temple?⁴⁹
2. What was the position and status of the *Sarbrah*?⁵⁰
3. What was the committee of Sardars doing or was really meant for?
4. Who should make the Temple functionaries accountable?
5. Why were only the army-men or *Jagirdars* were being made the head-*granthis* or the *Sarbrahs*?⁵¹

Thus, there was a strong anti-British stance of the emerging Sikh awakening in the Punjab over the issue of control over Golden Temple by the State. The contradiction between the Sikhs and the colonial state was clear and focal on this head. It was true that the contradiction did not develop into a full-fledged confrontation till 1919. But this was a different issue, though equally important to know for the historians.

47. *The Tribune*, December 12, 1885.

48. In its issue of Feb. 25, 1887 *Khalsa Akhbar* noted with pain that both Harnam Singh (head-*Granthis*) and Man Singh (*Sarbrah*) were the *Jamadars* in the army.

49. See, *Khalsa Akhbar*, April 9, 1887 and August 6, 1887.

50. *Ibid.*, January 1, 1887; Also Dec. 4, 1886.

51. An Amritsar paper named *Singh Sahai* in its issues dated March 28, 1894 and June 28, 1895, discussed the merits of the *Sarbrah*. On June 28, it proposed that an English educated Sikh should be the *Sarbrah*.

HANDICRAFT INDUSTRY IN COLONIAL PUNJAB : A STUDY OF COTTON TEXTILE

Gopal Parshad*

Cotton textile was the oldest handicraft industry of Punjab. The art and craft of this region were very famous since time immemorial. The demand for cotton clothes was very high throughout the world. But during the colonial rule, this industry was badly affected by the economic policies of the Britishers, which aimed at importing foreign goods in Punjab. Historians call it the disintegration or de-industrialization of handicraft industries. R.C. Dutt says that the manufacturers of silk and cotton goods suffered a decline in India due to import of foreign goods. He argues: ". . . . It is a painful episode in the history of British rule in India; but it is a story which has to be told to explain the economic condition of the Indian people, and their present helpless dependence on agriculture. The innovation of power-loom in Europe completed the decline of Indian industries; and when in recent years the power-loom was set up in India, England, once more acted towards India with unfair jealousy. . . ."¹

Britishers also imposed heavy excise duty on Indian manufacturers to protect Lancashire industries. It is believed that technological obsolescence also made an adverse impact on the handicraft industries. Amiya Kumar Bagchi argues that a decline in textile industry took place in nineteenth century. He writes that in the share of this industry in total employment in Gangatic Bihar came down from as high as 18 percent during 1820 to as low as 8 percent in 1901.² R.C. Dutt and other nationalist writers showed

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1. R. C. Dutt, *The Economic History of India*, Vol. 1, (Two Vols. Bound in One), Low Price Publication, New Delhi, 1990, (Reprint), p. vii.
2. A. K. Bagchi, "De-industrialization in India in the Nineteenth Century: Some Theoretical Implications", *Journal of Development Studies*, 12 (October, 1976), pp.135-64.

de-industrialization on the basis of trade reports.³ Jawaharlal Nehru argued that India became progressively ruralized in nineteenth century owing to the destruction of artisanal employment by goods made in British factory.⁴ Similar arguments can be found in the work of Dadabhai Naoroji and some other nationalist and Marxist historians. But Tirthankar Roy does not agree with these arguments. Regular census, which started from 1881, showed that there was practically no decline in the number of artisans engaged in handicraft industries. He mentions: "If de-industrialization is defined as a general process of technological obsolescence, then such an assertion is invalid. Technological obsolescence is an irreversible process. If small-scale industry became obsolete by 1850, it must become even more obsolete by 1900, because the pace of technological progress is always faster in the machinery-using industry compared with the tool-using ones. . . ."⁵ He says that the case of cotton textile industry can not be generalized into other small-scale industries. It continued fulfilling the demands of the special kind of coarse clothes. He further argues: ". . . . Cotton-spinning by hand and partly handloom weaving declined in competition with the British goods, a decline that occurred between 1820-80. On the other hand, in data after 1880, we see a substantial stability in handloom weaving. . . ."⁶ American scholar Morris D. Morris, however, argues that de-industrialization itself was a myth. He pleads that hand-loom survived because total market for cloth expanded in nineteenth century India.⁷ But Tirthankar Roy seems to differ with Morris D. Morris's view that the growth of market helps in the survival of hand-loom industry. However, on the survival of cotton textile

3. From India, 2636 bales of cotton piece goods were exported to United Kingdom in 1800, which decreased up to 433 bales in 1829 and total import of cotton piece goods from England was £64,449 in 1823, which increased up to £197,290 in 1829. See for detail study R.C. Dutt, *The Economic History of India*, Vol. I, pp. 211-212; Tirthankar Roy mentions: "In 1833, India imported about 46 million yards of British cloth. In 1887, India imported 2100 million yards, which was the maximum that imports reached." Tirthankar Roy, *The Economic History of India 1857-1947*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000, p.126.
4. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, Maridian Books, London, 1947, pp. 247-253.
5. Tirthankar Roy, *The Economic History of India, 1857-1947*, p. 125.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Morris D. Morris, "Towards A Reinterpretation of Nineteenth Century Indian Economic History", *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 4, (December 1963), pp. 606-618.

handicraft industry, Tirthankar Roy says: " Handlooms and mills had comparative advantages in different types of cloth. Many consumers preferred to buy the cloths that the handlooms were better able to make. These markets experienced commercialization, capital accumulation, and eventually new investments. In this view, the new tools were the effect, and not the cause of survival. To sum up, the textile experience had two aspects—competition with large-scale industry as in spinning, and segmented markets between small-scale and large-scale industry as in handloom weaving."⁸ Thus the decline of cotton textile handicraft industry has remained the issue of debate and deliberations.

Disintegration of handicraft industries in different parts of India during British rule has been seriously probed in the last few decades. But no comprehensive study dealing with disintegration or survival of cotton textile handicraft industry in colonial Punjab has so far been undertaken.⁹ True, there is substance in the view expressed by some historians that foreign goods destroyed the handicraft industries. But it never means that no efforts were made to improve the techniques used in this industry. It is in this context that this paper is being presented as an attempt to assess the technological change and survival of cotton textile handicraft industry in colonial Punjab. In other words, the paper takes a fresh look at the cotton textile handicraft industry that existed in the colonial Punjab.

It is believed that English cotton cloth and thread that started reaching the Indian shores after the turn of the nineteenth century ruined the cotton textile handicraft industry in India. Be that as it may, the issue has its dimensions, and, as such, lends itself to a serious consideration. It has been rightly observed that the increase of foreign trade had a critical impact on this industry, and the situation turned for the worse by the import of cotton piece-goods and export of raw material. The cotton textile handicraft industry suffered also from lack of financial help. All these problems did cause some obstacles in the path of development of this industry, but it survived in Punjab in a significant manner. It was owing to the reason that the populace always chose to prefer coarse cotton cloth, called *khaddar*. That's why its production continued despite all the adverse circumstances prevailing at that point of time. Hence, cotton textile handicraft industry continued to survive in some

8. Tirthankar Roy, *The Economic History of India, 1857-1947*, p. 127.

9. However, B. S. Saini in *The Social and Economic History of the Punjab 1901-1939* and Harish C. Sharma in *Artisans of the Punjab* have dealt this issue.

manner in the colonial Punjab. Sumit Sarkar rightly argues: " Village craft in the interior, and particularly in regions other than eastern India, where British penetration was earliest and deepest, probably survived much longer, coming to be seriously affected only with the spread of railways."¹⁰ However, in the regions of the country like those of Punjab, where colonial rule was established much later (in 1849), the impact of foreign-goods was less than it was in the other regions like Bombay, Bengal, Madras and Gujarat. In fact, in such regions cotton textile handicraft industry did not face any tough competition from the British goods.

There were two types of cotton textile handicraft industry in colonial Punjab, viz., rural and urban.¹¹ In villages, this industry, as is well-known, was largely dependent on caste-based hereditary occupations or traditional skills. In villages, some people took to agriculture. They helped their *Jajmans* or patrons in ploughing the fields, watering the plants and weeding etc. But, at the same time, they produced the clothes and other articles for local use.¹² The rural artisans of cotton textile industry belonged to menial castes such as *Julaha*, *Dhanak*, *Chamar*, *Koli*, *Paoli*, *Muslim* etc. They belonged to Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities. They weaved cotton clothes on '*Jajmani*' system.¹³ Under this system, they were paid in kind or sometimes in cash also. They received grain as per the share fixed traditionally out of the produce.¹⁴ The second type of cotton textile handicraft industry was urban, which was also called as workshops, factories or *karkhanas*. These

10. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India, 1885-1947*, Macmillan India Ltd., Madras, 1985, (First Published in 1983), p.29.

11. Tirthankar Roy has divided cotton textile handicraft industry into two heads viz., peasant weaver and urban factory, See Tirthankar Roy, *Artisans and Industrialization*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1993, p. 12.

12. G.H. Traveskis, *An Economic History of Punjab*, Vol. I, Vintage Books, Gurgaon, 1923, pp.136-138.

13. The word of '*Jajmani*' originally referred to the client for whom the *Brahman* priest performed rituals. It is now generally used to refer to the patron or the recipient of specialized services. It is also mutual obligations for work and payment between the land owners and artisans. William Wiser, *The Hindu Jajmani System*, Lucknow Publishing House, Lucknow, 1958, p. xxii; Peter Mayer, "Investing Village Tradition: The Late 19th Century Origin of North Indian Jajmani System," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 2, (1993), pp. 357-395; Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, Delhi, 1996, p.28.

14. Dharama Kumar (ed.), *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. II, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, p.18.

workshops were run by the small traders, merchants and entrepreneurs. Handloom workshops could be seen at every town and in every city in colonial period.¹⁵ Skilled artisans like *Julahas, Chamars, Dhanaks* etc., manufactured various kinds of cotton cloth in urban handicraft industries. They produced cloth on cash payment like at piece rates or on daily wages. Sometimes, they weaved cotton textile on '*Dadni*' system.¹⁶

After the establishment of British rule in 1849, the colonial government developed the means of transport and communication like rail, road and telegraph.¹⁷ All these developments were made to serve the interests of the British capitalists. Britishers started to import cotton piece-goods in Punjab, which reduced the markets for handloom clothes. The change in fashion and the taste of the Indians also affected this industry. D.R. Gadgil also mentions that the machine-made goods and the introduction of railways ruined the handicraft industry completely.¹⁸ But, in Punjab, we find the picture quite different. In this region the cotton textile handicraft industry did not totally disintegrate. It continued to survive in Punjab, where colonialism had its effects either late or its effect didn't manifest itself in the real sense. The Britishers did not abolish the old caste-system in India. They also maintained old socio-religious laws and customs.¹⁹ The traditional producers and consumers of handloom cloth remained intact. In fact, the English cotton clothes did not as much affect the handicraft industry of the colonial Punjab, as it did in the other parts of the country like Bombay, Madras, Ahmadabad etc. In these centres, railways and modern industries developed earlier than

15. Tirthankar Roy, *Artisans and Industrialization*, p.18.

16. In this system the merchants or middlemen gave advance payments to the weavers for manufacturing cotton clothes according to the demand of the markets.

17. Narayani Gupta, *Delhi Between Two Empires 1803-1931*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1981, p. 42; Dharama Kumar (ed.), *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. II, p. 739; B.S. Saini, *The Social and Economic History of the Punjab 1901-1939*, Ess Ess Publication, Delhi, 1975, pp. 299 and 310-312; Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, pp. 68-70.

18. D. R. Gadgil, *The Industrial Evolution of India in Recent Times 1860-1939*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1972, p.2.

19. Mustpha Kamal Pasha, *Colonial Political Economy: Recruitment and Underdevelopment in the Punjab*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1998, p. 12; B. S. Saini, *The Social and Economic History of the Punjab, 1901-1939*, pp. 48-49; H.C. Sharma, "Social Mobility Among the Artisans of the Punjab: Nature and Magnitude (1849-1947)", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XXI-II, (October, 1987), pp.291-297.

Punjab. Tirthankar Roy writes: "...despite an initial decay, cloth production in handlooms was growing from about 1900...."²⁰ Handloom production, especially the coarse cotton cloth, survived, which was durable and low in prices in comparison with machine-made cotton cloth.²¹

Various changes in the nature of cotton textile handicraft industry took place in Punjab. Due to the development of railways, the villages came closer to the cities and towns. Now villagers started selling their products in urban markets on cash payments. During the colonial period cash flowed into villages, which led to doing away with the old '*jajmani*' arrangement at a slow pace. Thus the weavers started using English thread and synthetic dye in the handloom industries. Tirthankar Roy calls this change in the industrial structure as revival of handloom industry. He further mentions: "The most apparent result of this revival has been a fairly stable coexistence of modern and old technologies in textiles. Handlooms not only survived power-looms but did so before the coming of protective policies with independence...."²² In some towns, weavers used pit-looms, frame-looms and improved loom i.e. fly shuttles.²³ Long warps also began to be used on fast looms. This loom could save more time than the old loom.²⁴ In Barabanki (a district in U.P.), a handloom industry-cum-school was established on the pattern of new technique.²⁵ It had fifty reels and could take fifty threads in one operation. It weaved finer quality cloth with better designs. Such looms were also established in various parts of Punjab. But rural Punjabi women preferred using local threads. In fact, they needed some technological guidance to use improved looms.²⁶ A. Latifi writes: "There are a great many improved looms in the market, most of which are better than the Indian pit-loom. Amongst the best known are the 'Japanese', the Dhariwal and Salvation Army frame-looms and the ordinary fly-shuttle loom.

20. Tirthankar Roy, *Artisans and Industrialization*, p.3.

21. Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, p.72; Tirthankar Roy, *Cloth and Commerce: Textile in Colonial India*, Indian Economic and Social History Association, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 1996, pp.11-27.

22. Tirthankar Roy, *Artisans and Industrialization*, p.3.

23. For details see, A. Latifi, *Industrial Punjab: A Survey of Facts, Conditions and Possibilities*, Longman's Green and Co., London, 1911, pp.3-6 and 16-23.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Various technological-cum-weaving schools were also established at Salem in Madras, Serampore in Bengal. See, *Ibid.*, pp.14 and 20.

26. *Ibid.*, p.20.

The frame-loom works faster than the fly-shuttle, but is far more expensive, and requires a thick and strong warp, except in the rare case where the weaver can be trusted to do the beaming very carefully."²⁷ Improved handlooms were set up at Bhera, Hafizabad, Ferozepur, Kahnuwan (Gurdaspur), Werka (Amritsar), Chakwal and other places of Punjab.²⁸

The development of industries always depends on the ready availability of raw material and financial help. Some historians mention that every year a large quantity of raw cotton was exported to England. So, cotton textile handicraft industry faced lack of raw material. In fact, Punjab was a large cotton producing region in north India.²⁹ Cotton became one of the main commercial crops during colonial period, and it can be ascribed to the extension of irrigation. Michelle Maskiell mentions that women in rural areas commonly picked and ginned cotton when they did no other field work, and spun thread to meet their family's cloth requirements. Urban women also spun thread for their family's cloth.³⁰ However, it seems that raw material was easily available in this region. Various cotton ginning and processing modern industries were also producing threads which could be used in handloom industries in Punjab.³¹

The handicraft industries of cotton textile were financed by the middlemen and the traders. They also provided raw material to the weavers.³² Some artisans of cotton textile handicraft industry produced clothes for shopkeepers and markets at piece rates. The manufacturers of hosiery sold their goods to markets through dealers or travelling agents, who were paid commission for this work at the rate from 3½ percent to 10 percent.³³ In spite of that, some British entrepreneurs also financed cotton textile handicraft

27. The fly-shuttle was very cheaper to establish. Its real cost was about 15 Rupees and the cost of its fitting was about 8 Rupees. *Ibid.*, p.22.

28. *Ibid.*, p.23.

29. *Imperial Gazetteer of India (Punjab)*, 1908, Vol.-I, pp. 60-61; A. Latifi, *Industrial Punjab*, p.24.

30. Michelle Maskiell, "Embroidering the Past: Phulkari Textile and Gendered Work as 'Tradition' and 'Heritage' in Colonial and Contemporary Punjab", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 58, No. 2, (May 1999), pp.361-388.

31. P. H. Kaul, *Census of India, 1911*, Vol. XIV: *Punjab*, Part 1, Civil and Military Gazette Press, Lahore, 1912, p.498.

32. B. S. Saini, *The Social and Economic History of the Punjab 1901-1939*, pp. 287-288; Tirthankar Roy, *Artisans and Industrialization*, p.85.

33. *Ibid.*

industry.³⁴ Sometimes, the village weavers were engaged by the village chief and land-owners to produce cotton goods for them. They were paid for this work either in kind or in cash.³⁵

Various types of cotton cloth were manufactured in the handicraft industries of colonial Punjab. In cloth manufacturing process, cotton was first gathered and separated from the seeds with the help of '*belna*'. After this process, it was cleaned from bit of seeds and dirt and also frayed out and separated by a very simple apparatus called '*pinjan*.' When cotton was cleaned, it formed into spindle shaped lumps or balls which were called '*puni*', from which thread was drawn out and twisted. This was done with the help of a '*charkha*', an instrument consisting of a large lantern wheel.³⁶ After obtaining thread with the help of a '*charkha*', it was put into the weavers' hands in the shape of large skeins. The weavers weaved various types of cotton clothes, like *susi*, *lungis*, *kheses*, *darris*, *chaddars*, *coastings*, *shirtings*, *curtains*, *turbans*, *towels*; *patkas* etc.³⁷

Local variety of coarse cotton clothes was known as '*khaddar*'. It was a white cloth with a single wrap and weft. It was woven in every town and village of Punjab. Coarse yarn of Punjab mills and home spun material of Delhi was generally used in '*khaddar*' cloth. This type of cloth was supplied in Kangra, Multan and Amritsar.³⁸

The first type of cotton cloth consisted of *lungis* and *patkas* in check or plain, which had a large demand in Punjab. These types of cotton fabric were manufactured at Jalandhar, Peshawar, Rewari, Derajat, Ambala, Sirsa etc. *Lungi* and *patka* were sold at the rate varying between Rs. 8 to Rs. 27 respectively.³⁹

The second type of coarse cotton cloth comprised *khes*, *chaddar* or *dotahi*. These were woven in check or plain stuff at Rohtak, Ludhiana,

34. Leland Hamilton Janka, *The Migration of British Capital to 1875*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1927, p.225.

35. Dharama Kumar (ed.), *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. II, p.21.

36. George Watt mentions that there were two kinds of cotton cleaning machines— foot-roller or *pauvatna* and the *charkha*. For details see George Watt, *A Dictionary of Economic Products of India*, Vol. IV, Government of India Press, Calcutta, 1886, pp. 152-153; *Punjab District Gazetteer of the Gurgaon District, 1884*, p.89.

37. *Ibid*.

38. *District and State Gazetteer of Undivided Punjab* (Prior to Independence), Vol. IV, p.361.

39. H. Baden Powell, *Handbook of Manufacturers and Arts of the Punjab*, Vol. II, Punjab Printing Company, Lahore, 1872, p.1.

Lahore, Rawalpindi, Dera Ismailkhan, Shahpur etc. The cost of one white or plain *khes* was Rs. 7 and the value of one check *khes* was Rs. 2-10. The *khes* and *chaddars* were made of coarse cotton stuff with double wrap and double weft. They were used as wrappers in the winter and also as bedspread.⁴⁰

The other variety of cotton cloth was known as fine Muslin, which was manufactured at Rohtak, Hoshiarpur and Lahore. '*Dhotar*' and '*silara*' were the varieties of Muslin cloth.⁴¹ This type of cloth was used by women.⁴² In spite of these, *darris* were also woven in Punjab. These were woven on frame over which the *warp* was stretched. The weft was wound on an iron, which was carried across the warp threads from head to head, at least two men required to work in this arrangement.⁴³ *Darris* were woven by *Mochis*, *Seikhs*, *Julahas* and *Kashmiris* at their own homes as well as in factories. The manufacturers of *darris* received 6 *annas* per day. The prices of *darris* varied from place to place. In Ludhiana and Sialkot these were sold at the rate of 1 Rupee per *seer* and in Ambala these were sold from 10 *annas* to 14 *annas* per square yard.⁴⁴ In spite of these carpets, piles, tapes, curtains, tents etc. were manufactured in Punjab.⁴⁵

The coarse cotton cloth had a vast market in Punjab and in its neighbouring provinces, and also in some Asian countries. The producers of this industry sold their clothes at the local *haats* or directly to the consumers. But independent weavers faced more difficulties in selling their cloth. They had to sell their products to the dealers of yarn through middlemen as well as to the markets. Village weavers sold their clothes to the dominant section of the rural society. That explains why most of the weavers were in debt.⁴⁶

The British government, by giving loans and donations, also gave some boost to cotton textile handicraft industry of Punjab. In fact, it sometimes appears that this industry had not much direct or indirect competition with the British cotton textile industry. W.E. Cooper, the president of '*Upper*

40. *Ibid.*, pp.5-6.

41. *Imperial Gazetteer of Gurgaon District 1884*, p.89.

42. Baden Powell, *Handbook of Manufacturers and Arts of the Punjab*, Vol.II, p.9.

43. *Monograph on Carpet Making in Punjab, 1905-06*, Civil and Military Gazette Press, Lahore, 1906, pp. 1-2.

44. A. Latifi, *Industrial Punjab*, pp. 33-34.

45. G.C.M. Birdwood, *The Industrial Art of India*, White Hall, London, S.U. I, 1971, pp. 244-245.

46. Tirthankar Roy, *Artisans and Industrialization*, p.86.

India Chamber of Commerce stressed on the protection of handicraft cotton textile industry in the annual meeting, which was held at Kanpur in 1897.⁴⁷ In 1911, the government sanctioned an institution of a model weavery at Ludhiana with a staff of one weaving assistant, one mechanic, and five weavers for a period of two years. The government further extended its sanction for the next four years with a supervisor, a weaving-master and a few other helpers.⁴⁸ The colonial government also donated 2800 Rupees, a loan of 5000 Rupees at the interest of 6½ percent per year and a subsidy of 3000 Rupees for one year.⁴⁹ The department of industries had sent mobile exhibitions of looms to some weaving villages.⁵⁰ In 1908, Salvation Army School established a weaving school at Ludhiana to improve the handloom weaving.⁵¹ Some technical and industrial schools were run by the Punjab government. *Mayo School of Art* at Lahore, *Government Technical School* at Lahore, *Sir Louis Dane Weaving School* at Ludhiana also played an important role in the growth of this industry. National leaders also raised demand for the government protection to this industry.⁵² During *Swadeshi* and national movements for independence, this industry began to rise again. Women in every village as well as in town plied *charkha*. The people boycotted the foreign cotton clothes.⁵³ During the First World War, the demand for handloom cotton goods, like tents, uniforms of the soldiers etc. increased. Most of these articles were supplied from Punjab.⁵⁴ All these developments forced the government to make some policies in favour of cotton textile handicraft industry. Government also established industrial institutions in various parts of Punjab.⁵⁵ Improved fly-shuttles were also

47. *The Tribune*, March 10, 1897.

48. A.C. Badenoch, *Punjab Industries*, Punjab Government Press, Lahore, 1917, p.2.

49. A. Latifi, *Industrial Punjab*, p.17.

50. *Ibid.*, p.15.

51. *Ibid.*

52. Bipan Chandra, *Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1979, p.77.

53. Bipan Chandra, Amal Tripathi and Barun De, *Freedom Struggle*, National Book Trust India, Delhi, 1994, (First edition, 1972), pp. 83-84; Jaganand Jha, *Khadi and Village Industries in Economic Development*, Deep and Deep Publication, New Delhi, 1990, p.156.

54. *Report on the Internal Trade of Punjab by Rail and River, 1916-1917 to 1918-19*, p.41.

55. Gopal Parshad, *Industrial Development in Northern India (A Study of Delhi, Punjab and Haryana 1858-1918)*, National Book Organisation, New Delhi, 2007, p. 216.

supplied to two hundred weavers, who were the prisoners in Punjab jails. The aim of '*Arya Samaj*' was to lift the weaker sections of the society. So, it also worked for the improvement of *Megh* weavers in Sialkot and other regions of the Punjab.⁵⁶

Artisans played a significant role in the development of cotton textile handicraft industry in Punjab during colonial rule. The weavers mostly belonged to *Julaha* caste among Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities.⁵⁷ In spite of that, some *Chamars*, *Kolis*, *Paolis* and *Meghs* also adopted weaving occupation in colonial Punjab.⁵⁸ The artisans lived in villages (where more than 85 percent of the total population lived) as well as in towns and cities. The total population of Punjab was 85 lacs in 1881, which increased up to 95 lacs and 104 lacs in 1891 and 1901 respectively, but decreased from 104 to 100 lacs between 1901-1910. In 1921, total population of Punjab crossed the figure of 107 lacs. In 1931, total population of Punjab was about 124 lacs.⁵⁹ The number of actual weavers was 3,87,633 in 1881 and 2,34,802 in 1931.⁶⁰

In villages, the artisans weaved clothes as hereditary occupation. They weaved clothes on '*jajmani*' arrangement, which was known as '*sepidari*' system in Punjab.⁶¹ They were part-time weavers. The total number of part-time weavers was 65,846 (about 30 percent).⁶² They helped their '*jajmans*' or land-owners in their fields and during off seasons, and they also produced cotton clothes for them. The remuneration to the artisans varied from place to place. They did not receive cash payment for their work. They were usually paid in kind, which was determined by local traditions. They were paid from 6 to 10 *seers* per plough. In Jalandhar, *Chamars* received about one-fourth *seer* out of every *maund* of produce.⁶³ In Montgomery, they received two *maunds* of grain per well, per year, one

56. *Ibid.*

57. Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, pp. 202-203.

58. *Ibid.*

59. Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, pp. 41-42; *Census of Punjab 1891*, pt. II, 10-11; *Census of Punjab 1921*, pt. II, 2; *Census of Punjab 1931*, pt. I, 15-177; pt. II, 2, 285-301.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

61. William Wiser, *The Hindu Jajmani System*, p. xxii.

62. Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, p. 73.

63. J.A. Grant, *Monograph on the Leather Industries of Punjab, 1891-92*, Civil and Military Gazette Press, Lahore, 1893, pp. 4-5.

'topa' (heap) per head at each harvest, and a day's cotton-plucking during the season.⁶⁴ In Hoshiarpur, they were paid one *seer* per *maund* or one-fourth of the harvest.⁶⁵ But all the dues to the artisans were deducted from the produce before making any other payment. This deduction varied from 10 to 16 percent of the total produce.⁶⁶

The village artisans of cotton textile lived in poverty. However, cash flowed in villages, and 'jajmani' system started breaking slowly during colonial rule. Even then, rural artisans worked under traditional arrangements. They were the first victims of any failure of crops, famines, floods, droughts and epidemics. They were also humiliated by the land owners from time to time. They also had to pay various taxes like 'khud kamini' (door cess or *chulha* tax) to the state government, which was about two rupees per annum.⁶⁷ The artisans always sought government's help. In fact, on many occasions, they protested against this tax. The weavers (*Julahas*) of Shahpur refused to pay this tax.⁶⁸

The artisans in towns and cities worked in 'karkhanas' or workshops. They were more rational and closely organized. They were free from 'jajmani' system. In 'karkhanas' or workshops, the skilled artisans of cotton textile were paid 10 *annas* to 14 *annas* per day, or 5 to 15 rupees per month.⁶⁹ Unskilled artisans, who worked under capitalist traders, were earning about 3 *annas* to 5 *annas* per day. The women and children got fewer wage than the male artisans. They got 2 *annas* to 4 *annas* per day.⁷⁰

During colonial rule, various changes took place in the complexion of the artisans. The development of railways opened wide markets in India for piece-goods of Britain. It seems that the countryside came closer to cities and towns. At some places shops were now stocked with foreign goods.

64. Himadri Benerjee, "The Kamins of the Punjab 1849-1914", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XI-II, (October, 1977), p. 295.

65. Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, p. 32.

66. *Ibid.*; Harish C. Sharma, "The Artisans of the Punjab (1849-1947): Occupational Change and New Social Relation", *Journal of Regional History*, Vol. I (1981), pp. 107-119.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

68. J. Willson, *Final Report on the Revision of Settlement of Shahpur District in the Punjab, 1887-94*, Civil and Military Gazette Press, Lahore, 1884, p. 52.

69. *Proceedings of the Foreign Department* (September, 1850), No. 77-81; Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, p. 37.

70. Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, p. 37.

The old '*jajmani*' system was breaking gradually. Thus the demands of handicraft goods started decreasing in some big cities. Some artisans gave up their hereditary occupations and became agricultural labourer or factory workers.⁷¹ Some *Chamars* started weaving clothes.⁷² In fact, the impact of foreign goods was less in those regions of Punjab which were not connected with railways. In spite of this, coarse cotton continued to be the prime choice of rural and urban people also.⁷³

The overall condition of the weavers or artisans of handicraft cotton textile was not satisfactory. The wages of the artisans in Punjab were very low in comparison to those in Bengal. The food prices also fluctuated from time to time. Between 1873-1903, the wages of the artisans had increased considerably in Bengal, Assam and Punjab in comparison to other parts of India. But during 1860, the prices of food grains rose as a result of growth of export trade and expansion of medium of circulation. All these affected the daily life of the artisans. The average wage of an artisan was between 2 to 7 *annas* per day, while he could earn 60-120 *annas* per month. He could purchase 14.5 *seer* wheat per Rupee.⁷⁴ The artisans had to do other social and religious ceremonies like marriages of their children and celebration of festivals etc. In fact, they had to borrow advance money from money-lenders or capitalist-traders which was called *baqi*. The advances were never deducted from the wages of the artisans, and remained outstanding against their names.⁷⁵ Some artisans worked on *dadni* arrangement. In villages, they had to pay *begaar*.⁷⁶ They got advance money from the traders or money-lenders. So, they were always in debt. However, village artisans could feel more secure under social obligations of land owners than the urban artisans.⁷⁷

The colonial government wanted to use Punjab to obtain raw material for Lancashire industry and market for British cotton piece-goods. The

71. *Ibid.*, pp.88-105.

72. *Ibid.*; for details see Nihal Chand Anand, *The Punjab Alienation of Land Act No.XIII 1900*, Amrit Book Company, Lahore, 1924.

73. K.C. Yadav, *History of Haryana 1803-1966*, Vol.III, Macmillan India Ltd., Delhi, 1981, p.228.

74. *Imperial Gazetteer of India 1907*, Vol. III, p.458.

75. Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, p. 37.

76. Oscar Lewis, *Village Life in Northern India*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1958, pp.57-59.

77. Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, pp. 37-38.

policies adopted in Punjab by the Britishers were different from the ones followed by them in other parts of the country like Bombay, Calcutta and Ahmdabad.⁷⁸ In fact, modern industries began to be established in these places. These modern industries had direct competition with the British industry. However, Punjab continued to remain the agriculture region. Coarse cotton cloth was produced here which had no direct competition with foreign piece goods.⁷⁹ As stated earlier, colonial government gave some protection to handicraft industries by establishing technical schools and by giving loans and donations.⁸⁰ The department of industries had sent travelling exhibitions of looms to some weaving villages such as Bham in Gurdaspur district. Industrial Commission of 1916 also laid stress on the government's protection to the artisans and handicraft industry.⁸¹ As stated earlier, *Mayo School of Art* at Lahore, *Government Institute of Dying and Calico Printing* at Shahdara, *Government Technical School* at Lahore, *Government Hosiery Institute* at Ludhiana, *Army Salvation School* at Lahore etc. were run directly or indirectly by the government and played an important role in improving the condition of the weavers. But these efforts were not sufficient. In fact, the colonial government did not want to improve the condition of the weavers or artisans. Britishers feared that if weavers were educated, they would harm the British Industry.⁸²

At the end, we can say that colonial rule in Punjab established itself in stages. The Britishers implemented new administration and also developed the means of transportation and communication. All these changes broke the shackles of isolation of the villages. The villages came closer to the markets. As cash flowed into villages, the '*jajmani*' system started breaking gradually. The nature of handicraft industry began to change, but it was not transformed. The handloom industry continued to survive in rural and urban areas of Punjab. But, at the same time, some changes could be seen in this

78. Mustpha Kamal Pasha, *Colonial Political Economy: Recruitment and Underdevelopment in the Punjab*, p.165.

79. *Proceedings of the Department of Revenue and Agriculture* (March 1884), No. 49-66; for details See, Imran Ali, *The Punjab Under Imperialism, 1885-1947*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1989.

80. A. Latifi, *Industrial Punjab*, pp.15-18.

81. D. R. Gadgil, *Industrial Evolution of India in Recent Times, 1860-1939*, p.338.

82. *Proceedings of the Department of Commerce and Industry (Industries)*, (April 1916), No. 874; *Report of Industrial Commission 1916-18*, p.7; Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, p.81.

industry. The weavers began to use machine-made yarn and improved looms. 'Swadeshi' movement and First World War also gave some kind of impetus to this industry. The Punjab government established some industrial and technical schools in this region. 'Arya Samaj' and some other private bodies also played a significant role in the development of cotton textile handicraft industry. During the national movement, '*charkha*' became the symbol of nationalism. Since this industry had only limited competition with the British textile goods, it survived in colonial Punjab.

ARCHIVAL ISSUES IN PAKISTAN

*Ahmad Salim**

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The premise of social sciences is in dismal state in Pakistan as the state of teaching and of research is very poor and limited. Additionally, there are major problems in finding and accessing primary resources. Not much research of any quality takes place in the country, and the little that is undertaken by Pakistani social scientists is by those who live and work in the West. There have been cases where some researchers produced good quality work, while being based in Pakistan. However, mostly it was individual endeavour with minimal or incidental contribution by their institutions. Archives, along with libraries and private collections, are the most important means to improve the status of social sciences and also research in general. These repositories house primary resources, which are fundamental to any research work from its beginning to completion. Such facilities are scarce in Pakistan. If they exist, there are access related problems. It is difficult not only to access materials in public but also in privately owned archives, either by collectors or by the persons who produced the documents or the descendants of those persons. Secondly, neglect and disappearance of archival treasures of inestimable value are eroding the documentary heritage in Pakistan. Even in the 21st century, it appears that documentary heritage housed in Pakistan always remains at risk.

Before taking on this study, it would be well to define the word 'archives' and also review in briefly the archival development in the region prior to 1947. The word 'archives', in conformity with the current and universally accepted definition, is applied to all physical forms of documents, whether traditional ('textual'); pictorial; cartographic; photographic, including films and microfilms; sound; and 'machine-readable' (i.e. produced/used by computers).¹

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1. Peter Walne. Selected guidelines for the management of records and archives: a RAMP reader. PGI-90/WS/6 (Paris, March 1990).

In the Indian subcontinent, official records and documents used to be preserved in central depositories called the *Mahafez Khanas* during the Sultanate and the Mughal periods, though not in a systematic way. However, the systematic preservation of public as well as private records, both at central or provincial government levels, and even at the local government level, started with the beginning of British rule in India. The Government of the East India Company was a government that emphasized writing and records and that developed the secretariat structure of administration with all its divisions and sections. These departments and offices began to accumulate large number of documents of various types. In 1854 'Record Rules' were framed and in 1888 a Records Manual was separately published which was revised from time to time. The increase of secretariat files and records with the passing of time called for such measures as transferring the important ones to a central repository and then destroying the unimportant ones. In order to preserve important records, the Imperial Records Department was established in Calcutta in 1891. The transfer of capital from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911 necessitated the transfer of official records to the new capital. After the partition of the Indian Subcontinent, the name of the Imperial Records Department was changed to the National Archives of India. Later, National Archives of Pakistan was also formed.

Today, the most important archival and printed texts under public control are held in several major repositories in Pakistan to include National Archives of Pakistan, Islamabad; The National Documentation Centre (NDC), Islamabad; the Departments of Archives of Sindh, Punjab, NWFP, and Balochistan governments.

Government archives although fulfil the world level definition but these suffer from neglect and access related problems. Regarding neglect, there is a variable pattern in public archives. These are more likely to suffer at district levels than National archives.² In the latter, every precious document is simply waiting for the day when it will be finally eaten up by termites. On the other hand, access to information has always been denied to the people of Pakistan as a matter of both policy and practice. Nearly every administrative document produced after 1947 and a vast majority prior to that is marked classified. Most of the documents, which should be opened to public after a period of 20 to 30 years, as per law of the State, continue to be classified for longer time periods. 'The tradition of highly secretive

2. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

governments that survive on information blockades and control have eroded trust and confidence between the government and the civil society, and deprived the citizens from understanding the relevance of events at home and abroad.³

No concept of private archives exists in Pakistan but only private libraries. However, where private archives exist, along with the libraries, they don't fulfil the definition of archives mostly because owners lack resources and face security related problems. These archives are not under official control. They may contain collections relating to just a family or organisation/institution, but can contain wider collections.⁴ However, researchers face availability and access related problems in private archives as well. Private archives, as mentioned earlier, are few in number, and access to most of these are difficult as there is a social norm of keeping family or personal papers secret. The culture in which historical investigation is accepted for archives to be regarded as valuable and to be seen as open for proper scholarly investigation seems non-existent. Naturally there are social or political barriers to archival use.⁵

Until recently, private resource centres, whether they are libraries or archives, have been ignored in the country. Pakistan, a developing country with almost 70% of population living in the villages, is confronted with sociological challenges of assuring the rural and urban populace the right to information, access and use. Archives are a valuable cultural and historical asset and an avenue of research and information gathering for historians, journalists, writers and general public. However, we do not have very good archives. There is a need for the establishment of new and support and sponsorship of existing archives as they are important in ethnographic and historical research.⁶ The archives of national and local governments, of corporations, of non-governmental organizations, and of individual scholars, statesmen, and other figures provide the primary documentation of human activity. Private archives and resource centres are need of the hour as 'these can address some of the weaknesses in archival provision. They can raise professional standards of record-keeping, ensure access and proper preservation of historically important records.'⁷

3. Zaffurullah Khan, *Access to Information in Pakistan*, Islamabad, 2004, p.17.

4. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

5. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

6. Interview with Mr. Atta-ul Haq.

7. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

Whether in public or private, large numbers of documents in Pakistan are in an advanced state of deterioration due to climatic factors, internal degradation, catastrophes, improper handling, poorly designed storage areas, use of untested materials and lack of trained staff. Physical conditions are poor in archives and libraries, and problems of deteriorating collections are often exacerbated by the well-meaning but uninformed activities of untrained staff. 'Materials and books are so tightly crowded onto the shelves that they are distorted and more vulnerable to humidity damage because there is no air circulation.'⁸ Many valuable materials are piled on the floor because shelving is inadequate or has collapsed. Fragile indigenous titles could be found kept on the floor. Until quite recently, many facilities had missing windowpanes, and materials were exposed to dust, rain, and insect damage. Even today, staff members do not appreciate the importance of simple cleanliness: shelves and books are not dusted, and cigarette smoke and food preparation and consumption are pervasive in almost all libraries. Poorly paid and motivated archival staff, who have no pride in the collections they keep, are likely to be careless in handling records.⁹ A number of documents have also been destroyed or confiscated — in case of private archives, by the State on account of censorship. On times police raids on private collections of political and human rights activists have remained frequent.

Archives in Pakistan suffer from some of the signs of neglect relating to conservancy, cataloguing and accessibility. This neglect constitutes mainly of 'lack of human, financial etc. resources to maintain historical records, official censorship of state records and lack of public awareness about the state and value of archives and arises from a variety of factors. Some of which are policy related others are just because of lack of interest and carelessness from staff working with them.'¹⁰

Apparent social and official neglect to historical documentation in Pakistan has rendered archives more vulnerable to nature-related and man-related dangers than any other part of the world. 'Society wide attitudes to history and conservation of national heritage would require a long educative period. Although without such change, archives will always be open to misuse and neglect, training of those working with records can improve private

8. Interview with Mr. Hasnain Shaban.

9. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

10. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

record keeping. Good practice may then eventually spread at an incremental rate.¹¹

Archives in Pakistan face both the discriminating and non-discriminating threats. The nature-related and most man-related causes – like fire and water, neglect and use – tend to be non-discriminating. Whereas, the dangers to archives including on purpose destruction, cleansing and removal by individuals and States are discriminating.

Every year, precious fragments of the country's documentary heritage disappear through "natural" causes. For example acidified paper that crumbles to dust, leather, parchment, film and magnetic tape attacked by light, heat, humidity or dust. In addition, accidents regularly afflict libraries and archives. Floods, fires, hurricanes, storms and earthquakes are some of the disasters which are difficult to guard against except by taking preventive measures. Every year, treasures are destroyed by fire and other extreme weather conditions such as cyclones, monsoons. These non-discriminating dangers threaten all records equally. Some kinds of records are more vulnerable than others. This group of dangers is a well known foe of archives and an enemy not easily to be defeated. However, these threats are not central to the theme of this paper. We would, instead, focus more on the dangers of a very mixed nature that could be disguised in forms of non-discriminating threats. 'Specifically endangered record collections can be identified best after the attack resulting in damage or destruction.'¹² It would take a very long time to compile a list of all the libraries and archives destroyed or seriously damaged by acts of war, bombardment and fire, whether deliberate or accidental. For instance, as a result of communal riots in 1947, two of the largest libraries of the Indian subcontinent were damaged in Lahore. During these riots books and archival repositories and most of the major printing presses were also burnt by people.

Immediately after Partition 1947, State conducted attacks/police raids on the archives of progressive movements. There were also cases, when fearing stern action from government, the political workers themselves destroyed their respective party records and important political documents.

11. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

12. Memory of the World: Lost Memory – Libraries and Archives destroyed in the Twentieth Century / prepared for UNESCO on behalf of IFLA by Hans van der Hoeven and on behalf of ICA by Joan van Albada. – Paris: UNESCO, 1996. – ii, 70 pp. : 30 cm. (CI I-96/WS/1).

Sometimes, the families of political workers burnt all types of papers related to political activities. In fact, police raids have remained a serious threat to social and political records. In 1954, when Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP) was banned, all the records of the party from 1947 to 1954 were destroyed or confiscated during large scale arrests and police raids. A year earlier, during the anti-Ahmadiyya movement in Punjab and subsequent martial law, police raids were conducted on Jamaat-e-Islami and its allies. In addition to arrests, their literature was also destroyed. Then in 1958, during Ayub Khan's martial-law large scale arrests of political activists and leaders and destruction or confiscation of political literature took place. In Yahya regime, Awami League and NAP were declared illegal. The government agencies arrested hundreds of political workers in West Pakistan and destroyed their literature.

In Bhutto regime, the government took action against Jiye Sindh in Sindh and Insurgency in Balochistan. Activists and leaders were arrested. In addition killings took place and political literature was also destroyed. Although, illegal and underground literature came into being in large quantity but it was never organised and is found scattered. Where, Gen. Zia promoted a culture of political arrests, suppression and intolerance in his 12 years rule, he also played havoc with the literature of progressive movements. For example, in 1980 Zia carried out crackdown against CPP and got arrested various activists including Nazir Abbasi, who was tortured and killed in prison. The literature confiscated from CPP workers was declared anti-Pakistan and completely destroyed. Fortunately, we don't find many examples like the above in the present day Pakistan but it can't be guaranteed that this calm will prevail forever.

Safety Acts and other State Laws became instrumental for police raids/search in party offices and homes of political workers. In addition to destroying records, the State representatives held confiscations of records on a wider scale. The confiscated records were never returned. The case of Communist Party of Pakistan is quite significant in this regard. All the records of CPP were destroyed or confiscated by State, adopting oppressive measures. Now these records exist only in intelligence files. Sadly the list cannot be closed. There are so many more, not to mention holdings dispersed following the accidental or deliberate displacement of archives and libraries. No list has yet been drawn up of the holdings or collections already lost or endangered in Pakistan.

Where private owners are aware of the importance and value of their archives they often lack the expertise and resources necessary both to arrange and preserve their archives and to make them available for public consultation. 'In the West, a charitable trust would be the best means to provide financial resources to an extent. Archival users could be charged fees but these might not cover the initial costs of training and acquisition, although they would meet running costs. Records will only survive if they are acquired by those who have a genuine interest in preserving them and making them available for bonafide scholars. In the west, Universities contain archival collections, but given the problems within the Pakistan higher education system this role may need to be taken over by private individuals and organisations.'¹³

However, there are few encouraging examples spread throughout the country. A feudal lord of Mailsy, near Multan has maintained a comprehensive repository of valuable historical materials at his residence. These range from religion and languages to literature and are collected from various sources. There have been incidents when he purchased the collections of late scholars from their families. For example, he purchased the collections of Ain-ul-Haq Faridkoti and Irshad Ahmad Punjabi, renowned scholars of Punjabi literature and folklore. In view of prevalent social negligence to cultural heritage, he not only saves the books and papers from going to footpath but also preserves and opens them to interested people. The researchers and information seekers, visit his village where they are also provided free meals and accommodation. Some other private collections in the country include Gul Hayat Institute in village Arija, Larkana, the collections of Hussain Shah Rashdi in Sindh, and SARRC, Islamabad and Lahore. This is a positive move quite uncommon in the country. However, for the private collectors advice and assistance should be much more forthcoming than they appear to be having at present. 'Steps should be taken to prepare and distribute a range of archive manuals suitable for the administrators of the various categories of archives in private hands.'¹⁴

Generally speaking, the fate not only of public and official records, but also of private archives and special collections, like photographic and audio-visual archives in Pakistan is equally appalling. In many regions private archives and audio-visual materials will just vanish together with large

13. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

14. Interview with Mr. Baddar Siddiqui, an old book-seller of Lahore.

Administrative, Revenue & Other Records of Princely States; records related to the Transfer of Power and Round Table Conferences are classified. Regarding Constitutional and Legislative Developments, both pre-partition and post-partition Constitutional Reforms and Assembly Debates and Proceedings are classified. Additionally, the federal and provincial Policy Papers and Administrative & Revenue Records are classified.¹⁸

On January 29, 1997 the President promulgated the country's first Freedom of Information Ordinance. But none of its clauses were actually ever implemented. FOI Ordinance 2002, is a later development. Under this Ordinance, in order to access information, any citizen of Pakistan can submit an information request to the head of the relevant public body. If the requested information is not provided within 21 days, a complaint can be filed with the Federal Ombudsman, or, in the case of a complaint relating to the Revenue Division, to the Federal Tax Ombudsman.¹⁹ Nevertheless, little is known about the process or how it works and many challenges remain in bringing about the full implementation of the Ordinance. Notwithstanding these limited options and systems of disclosure, secrecy and control over information remain the norm. Given their mindset, the authorities also use a variety of informal means to restrict access to information, like delaying dissemination of information, publishing it in very limited number or only in English – the language of the elite minority.²⁰

Political reasons affect archives in multi-faceted ways. 'Records could even be left in the open when being moved, as happened recently in the Patiala Archives. Records can also be deliberately neglected for political purposes. For example, during the Ayub era, Muslim League records underwent neglect. There could be accidental fires and records could be stolen.²¹ Some of the disasters resulting in archival cleansing have been initiated by government or agents of the dominant political system, others from similar action by their opponents. A significant example is of Shaheed-e-Millat Secretariat in Blue Area, Islamabad. The building caught fire mysteriously and was completely destroyed. The building housed important records. Few people are of the opinion that those records were enough to put certain elements at a disadvantage. Therefore, they set fire to the building.

18. PH series 3.1. NDC, *Op.cit.*

19. Khan. *Op.cit.*, p.18.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

Dangers to archives come not just from the State, but from chauvinistic ethnic and religious groupings which want to control freedom of thought and see alternative pluralist understandings of the past as a threat to their power. Records which are 'subversive' provide importance not only for the past, but for the present and future. Preservation is vital in preparation for future dissemination even if this is not possible currently, either as a result of changing social and political attitudes or via electronic means.²² Government undertook the task of archival cleansing during various periods. The list is unlimited. However, we will document few cases here.

'The best known Pakistan example is the Ayub regime's attitude towards the Freedom Movement Archives of the Muslim League. Records were left to rot, even though they were of immense importance for understanding the creation of the country.²³ Another such example is of 1977 when General Zia toppled down Bhutto's government through martial law. Subsequently, libraries, radio and television stations were taken over by military. Bhutto's audio visuals, state speeches and important historical documents were either burnt down or buried in the ground outside the building where these materials had been confiscated. 'One such incident occurred in the Directorate of Film and Publications (Punjab Office, Lahore). The materials were buried outside the building.'²⁴ 'Censorship in the Zia era was also responsible for disappearance of Jinnah's famous speech of August 11, 1947 to the Constituent Assembly.'²⁵

Similarly during different political periods, government undertook massive operations of the arrests of leftists. During these, frequent police raids on private collections of prominent political workers resulted in complete destruction or disappearance of their books, personal and party records and a number of important historical documents. 'If record keeping is seen as a 'political' act, such interference can occur. It could involve in the destruction of records, or in severely limiting their access. Such action in the long run perpetuates the restrictive attitudes to the past which are unhealthy. Ultimately such records will be available in the public domain through electronic dissemination.'²⁶ The reality is, currently more than 90 percent

22. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

23. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

24. Interview with Mr. Zaheer, an old book-seller of Lahore.

25. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

26. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

record of Pakistani leftist movements, for example, Communist Party of Pakistan and National Awami Party, does not exist.²⁷

The records of ethnic minorities, just like those of social movements, pressure groups and voluntary organisations, etc. are at risk. 'These kinds of records challenge the political orthodoxy of the state and establishment parties/interests. In a non-democratic set up in which free speech is limited, such records are likely to be regarded as 'sensitive.' Interested parties would like to limit access to them if they are held in public archives.'²⁸ The political and human right activists don't trust government regarding their archives. 'Such groups would see government as committed to a particular version of history that might be challenged by scholars' access to their records. They might therefore fear that their records could suffer either through deliberate neglect or carelessness. They might also fear that access would be restricted to their collections.'²⁹ All the movements in which Hindus, Sikhs and other communities struggled for Pakistan and those in which people participated on non-communal grounds are considered a threat for State and Islam.

Namdhari Movement is an important aspect of the history of this region. According to the catalogue of West Pakistan Records the files of this movement were stored in Peshawar Archives.³⁰ Namdhari sect began with Baba Ram Singh. This sect rebelled against the British during the second half of 19th century. The British castigated them brutally by blowing the whole sect with cannons. Baba Ram Singh was banished to Rangoon. During exile, he wrote letters to some of his followers. His correspondence was confiscated by the government. Those files were resigned to Peshawar Archives but either they have been destroyed by the state or are completely inaccessible. The archival staff deny their presence, probably, considering it against the state ideologies. Similar is the fate of Bhagat Singh's file. On request by the author of this paper to permit access to these files in 1980s, the then Chief Secretary Punjab, said that this file was a threat to country's security, therefore, completely inaccessible.

The record collections related to minorities have faced dangers in various periods. Notably, the creation of Pakistan was impossible without minorities' struggle. However, various attempts by successive governments

27. Interview with Mr. Saeed Anwar.

28. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

29. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

30. *Ibid.*

on Islamising the State have marginalised them and rendered them in crisis situation. Some private institutions do their best to save endangered collections relating to minorities. However, these rescue operations will be successfully completed only after returning those collections as soon as the circumstances in the respective area have been normalised. Keeping records out of context endangers keeping and using records as well.

There is a growing awareness in Pakistan of the importance of the cultural heritage. However, side by side an unenlightened attitude persists on the part of government, many owners of private archives and the public at large. The absence of an educated view of record-keeping in which historical understanding and investigation is valued is resulting in lack of awareness of the value of archives.³¹ A rapid dispersal and destruction of archives and manuscripts is taking place in the country. It seems the State is not at all interested in its archival heritage. During my visit to Bangladesh in 1950, I met the daughter of Maulvi Tameezuddin (late), the speaker of National Assembly of Pakistan after Jinnah. She presented me the assembly proceedings and other important files of her father saying those files were the heritage of Pakistan and did not belong to Bangladesh.³²

Although, historians and allied scholars are broadening the scope of their researches, the social negligence towards archival treasures and significance of research continues to persist at large. The education system is biased towards technical studies. Hence, there is no appreciation of the importance of humanities and social sciences. Rote-learning of boring nationalist stuff is the prime focus.³³ In this situation, generally, students cannot develop an interest in research and understand the importance of archives. It has been observed that a man's whole life archival collections come to footpath after his demise. 'Attitudes regarding a lack of interest in the past are so pervasive that even those with historical records either see little value in keeping them or want to sell them without thought of future availability.'³⁴ One such example is of late Azeem Bhatti. His archival collections regarding Punjab, Punjabi and culture and art are sold on footpaths and in the old book shops in Rawalpindi on cheap rates.³⁵

31. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

32. These files have been preserved in my private collection for historians and scholars—Ahmad Salim.

33. Interview with Ms. Nosheen.

34. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

35. Interview with Mr. Salahuddin Siddiqui, an old book-seller of Rawalpindi.

Late Sardar Shaukat Ali, a leftist and a revolutionary, was a prominent political and social figure of the country. He remained involved in left politics for more than 60 years. On the third day of his death, his sons threw away his archives, papers and a major portion of his books just to clean the house. Mrs. Sardar Shaukat Ali says that as Sardar Shaukat Ali did not involve his family or children in his political and social activities all his life, they didn't understand the importance of the materials and what great struggle Sardar Shaukat Ali had done in his life. Those papers were junk for his sons and they wanted to get rid of them.³⁶ Similar is the story of another left politician Arif Iftikhar. He was son of a prominent left leader Mian Iftikhar-ud Din, who remained an MP during Ayub Khan's regime. Mr. Arif Iftikhar died many years back. But it was during last few years that his family moved to another house. During that they got rid of major portion of his library.³⁷ The collections that came to Lahore footpath included original photo albums of Chuen Lai's visit to Pakistan, whose host in Lahore was Mian Iftikhar-ud Din. In addition, all of the assembly proceedings of Mr. Arif Iftikhar and a major portion of socialist publications were found on footpath.

There are so many examples where collections of late scholars suffered from neglect and unenlightened attitude of State and scholars' families that it is quite impossible to enlist them all here. Not only this, but the books with souvenirs and autographs of authors and important personalities presented as gifts to their friends and relatives found their way to old book shops. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto presented the book, 'Myth of Independence, (OUP 1969)', to Gul (probably Gen. Gul Hassan). Mr. Bhutto has written on the first page, "*Gul I hope this will balance your 'Balance of Power' concept.*" This is an interesting remark keeping in view the prevalent political circumstances of that time. We purchased this book from an old book seller. We also found in Karachi's old books market, *Struggle for New Sindh*, by G.M. Sayed. The author himself had presented this book to Hatim B. Tayabji with the inscription on first page, "*With best compliments to Hon. Hatim B. Tayabji.*"

Keith Callard, a renowned historian of Pakistani politics, presented his book, '*Pakistan : A Political Study*, (George Allen Unwin, London, 1957)' to Mr. A.Q. Sheikh in 1958. The author has written on the first page, "*Hoping that he (Mr. A.Q. Sheikh) will not find this book too deficient in sympathy*

36. Interview with wife of late Sardar Shaukat Ali.

37. Interview with Mr. Zaheer, an old book-seller of Lahore.

for the country he loves so well". Another interesting recent example is of, 'The Khoja's (Hoja-Khwa'jah) *"The Chosen Ones"*, by Mr. Mohammad Aziz Haji Dossa. The author himself presented this book in July 2000 to the then Finance Minister Mr. Shaukat Aziz, now Prime Minister of Pakistan. Mr. Dossa writes on the first page, *"May Maula Abbas (peace be upon him) secure Mr. President, Pervez Musharaf from all adversities."*

There is a need for establishing private resource centres on a wider scale to facilitate quality research in Pakistan, which will also improve the status of social sciences in the country. Private resource centres serve as repositories of primary source materials. As discussed earlier, archives and private resource centres are either scarce in the country or pose access related problems. In addition, the existing archives suffer from neglect and are always at risk. The social and official negligence to research and archives has never provided a favourable atmosphere for private archives and resource centres.

Establishment of private resource centres is also called for because, over the last 56 years, the government did not do anything notable in this field. Every successive government, both autocratic and democratically elected, claimed to have given in their budget a heavier weight to education, but no government gave an equitable quota of taxes for archives or libraries out of both revenue income and development funds. Consequently, the present situation of the public and private archives of Pakistan remains extremely poor. No doubt, being a developing country, Pakistan has yet to achieve the social, economic, educational and technical standards common in the developed world.

While recognizing the situation within the country, there is a broad list of issues in the establishment of private resource centres and their protection and preservation. A single problem common to the existing private resource centres is the isolation and the lack of well-developed Information Technology infrastructure to overcome that isolation. The other factors playing an adverse role in the establishment of resource centres include economic factors, information resources, organizational structures, human resources, political factors, and geographical factors. The financial and technical factors are very important in setting up private archives. The lack of funds to buy and provide services and to automate archive/library functions remains a major obstacle. Regarding funding, the western practice is to be free of direct government assistance, although they might be in receipt of such things as Lottery Grants. They would be usually funded by companies/individuals

relating to the organisations whose records they keep. The technical hurdles relate to the training of staff. There is lack of technically trained personnel in the country plus insufficient user demand because of reliance on oral transmission of information. The financial costs involved in this in the acquisition of suitable premises and of the records themselves could be quite considerable. These could be overcome, by seeking funds from non-governmental sources. These might come from international bodies, or from within Pakistan through civil society organisations and charitable organisations.³⁸

There is a general lack of policy and unawareness on part of public regarding organization of information. Therefore, what we see are insufficient collections and lack of physical resources to house the archives and libraries. There is also a lack of cooperative mechanism among owners of various private repositories for acquisition. In addition the standards of library and information work, storage, and inter-lending are non-existent. Political factors also seriously affect the state of private as well as public archives in the country. The holders often face interference and sometimes apathy of the government, depending on socio-economic and political situation. Secondly, there is lack of government information as it is often classified, resulting in legal obstacles to the flow of government information. It results in apathy to the community to use the libraries and archives.

The case for establishment of private resource centres is very strong, particularly in view of current global trends. The advent of telecommunications, the internet, and low cost of computing have made possible the exchange and sharing of the world's vast resources among all the countries in the world instantaneously. To keep pace with other countries of the world, Pakistan should take immediate action to improve her information systems. It is only possible by establishing and backing up resource centres that will not only be able to show various directions to the mass population of Pakistan, but also these will work as a nucleus of socio-economic development on the whole.

In view of discriminating and non-discriminating threats to archives in Pakistan, some of which are mentioned earlier, there is a need to address the issue of preservation and promotion of private and public archives on countrywide scale with a renewed commitment at government and social

38. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

levels not only towards protecting and safeguarding our archives through disaster planning and vigilance but also to make them easily accessible following a pursuit of peace and openness.

As mentioned earlier, political factors have remained a major threat to political and social archives. Although the incidents of police raids on archives and private collections have decreased but there is no safeguarding mechanism in place to counter any possible attacks that may occur in future. The private archives should develop networking and resource sharing initiate awareness creation programs towards preservation of records. This could start from street level and journalists, scholars, intellectuals and political workers can play a significant role not only in educating public but also pressurising policy makers to put in place archive friendly legislations. In addition, awareness should be created on importance of the historical and cultural heritage. The press could be used to raise these issues of national heritage and its conservation in the widest sense. But lack of interest in the past and rampant materialism are not going to alter overnight. In the long run a more mature democracy in which there is greater transparency would create an environment for free historical debate and interest in archival matters.³⁹ Awareness creation is also needed for enabling public archives/libraries staff to market their services and products and to build up and maintain close relationships with the local community. This will develop the image of archives and libraries as community's historical and cultural asset and chief information resource. The government should allocate enough funds in this regard.

It is an urgent need to train archival staff/librarians with traditional knowledge and custodian mentality. Private archive administration should be included in archival training courses. These training courses would need to be conducted by trained archivists to cover such technical areas as conservancy, and cataloguing. UK trained archivists from the India Office have given such support in the past for public archives. Retired archivists might render similar services for private archives. Cataloguing skills would require degree level education preferably in History and conservancy would require more technical expertise.⁴⁰

The government should take interest in preserving all the documents of nation's social and political life like a culture and facilitating access of

39. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

40. Online interview with Prof. Ian Talbot.

these to public. A central database of archives at national level is a good idea; as it will reduce the dispersal and destruction of archives and manuscripts. Co-operation between the institutions administering public archives and manuscripts is essential. These institutions could include record offices, libraries, museums, and historical societies. In addition, government and civil society should initiate country-wide publicity programme to arouse archival consciousness, particularly directed to owners and also contact International Council on Archives for increased aid for private archives administration in Pakistan. The participation of historians and other interested scholars in these projects and activities should be enlisted.

The government should also address the legislation and access issues regarding archives. As a matter of fact, throughout our history, people have been kept in dark by denying them access to information about the affairs that shape their lives and destiny. No doubt, the public archives are part of the governmental and administrative framework of any country in the world. But at least, access related problems regarding public archives could be addressed to an adequate level that is not against the democratic right of the people of Pakistan. The Government should take necessary steps immediately to formulate a well designed and sophisticated information policy, which will facilitate the researchers and information seekers in general. It should specifically affirm the right of access to public archives defined in such a way as to eliminate the room for dispute. The policy should provide the necessary guarantees for access to private archives of outstanding interest for national history.

There is a question of survival of private archives, especially of a political nature. 'It is a very difficult situation for such archives, despite the value of their role.'⁴¹ Special attention should be given to systematic removal of archives by various governments – a removal possibly resulting in destruction of some if not all archive series involved, in order to remove or destroy proof of evidence, or simply for reasons of archival or cultural 'cleansing'. Governments should enact protective legislation and increase financial assistance to these archives.

41. Online interview with Prof. Iân Talbot.

EARLY PUNJABI MIGRATION TO CANADA : A POST-COLONIAL INVESTIGATION

*Mandeep Singh Chahal**

With the investiture of early documented history, human settlement is spotted as a zesty progression, activated by external and internal dynamics. Pre-civilized stage witnessed the humans as hunter-gatherers, leading nomadic life amid unstable cultural trails and limited assets. Communities and bands finally inhabited, with the inception of agricultural revolution, into permanent or semi-permanent settlements, which entrenched the itinerant-nomadic existence at one dear spot. These entrenched early settlements demonstrated decisive human traits that situated the foundation of all ensuing civilized existence on our planet. These settlements relied on few indispensable concerns like proximity of water, adequate fertile land for cultivation, grazing livestock, friendly climatic conditions, invulnerability to hazards, etc. Later through evolutionary phases it expanded into thriving civilizations exhibiting innovative characteristics like concepts of land ownerships, social hierarchies, nascent status of trade, surplus production, increased crop-yield, etc. which ultimately culminated in a complex society. Now man manifested cultural trajectories, which were later determined by circumstantial restrictions.

Movement or deracination has always remained a perennial attribute of all forms of premature settlements and civilizations. Such sedentary societies were normally based on approved ecological circumstances, that sustained healthy and clean life but in the absence or failure of the said ambience, the life generated in such clusters was forced to shift from one place to another. Often this was predisposed by the collapse of water-land synchronization, sometimes in forms of the floods, or else, the famines. There are also other manifest causes for the early land migration like adverse climatic conditions, spread of the epidemics, loss of fertility of land, religious migrations, decrease in area adaptation, hostility from other settlements,

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etc. On the advent of agriculture revolution, migration became an encouraging trend for search of better resources and freedom from religious and ideological conflicts. The migratory motions of the old world order were departures from the old and movements toward the new. This ushered deviation in the human existence within culture, social, mental and technological orb. It further propelled the fabric of the modern life in the narrow framework of old world order, and brought transition to stable social structures.

Migration is the human process of movement from one place and later relocation at another, intending to stay permanently, or for restricted period of time. During the early phase, it was a daring human venture into the unknown and the unexplored. Throughout prehistoric and historic periods humans are known to have migrated extensively. Since the advent of Industrial Revolution and the post-Enlightenment phase, the pace of migration has increased considerably.

In the Modern Period of the human history, there are only rare facets of the framework of life that are not deeply affected by the history of migration. This geographical mobility proved as an effective mechanism in the advancement of the concepts of nationality, race and culture. Andrew Smith claims, "The modern world is marked by greater numbers of people, moving more often and travelling greater distances, than ever before."¹ Human life witnessed countless voyages and exodus, which affected the parent land with the evacuation of the natives, but later witnessed cross-cultural encounters, with settlement at variety of adopted places.

This restructuring generated novel advanced forms of cultural experiences, which though rooted in the native culture of the migratory population, are potent to usher a new form of hybridised culture. The early migratory population established tenuous links with past, but carried the burden of nostalgia to their newfound lands. In this exceptional journey and later inhabitation, the migrants confronted formidable adversities of climate, land and culture. They were often bound to take refuge in their indigenous culture due to unfavourable and hostile surroundings. Remarkable form of adaptation was witnessed in the early duration of the pioneer settlers. The early migrants faced in-between position with fluid cultural identity, isolation

1. Andrew Smith, "Migrancy, Hybridity, and Postcolonial Literary Studies", Neil Lazarus (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, p.242.

from the static culture of the land, still rooted to the bygone ethnicity or in the words of R. Radhakrishnan, 'neither home nor not-home'². There was unresolved anxiety experienced at the arrival and hence the migrants mediate between isolation, entanglement and the burden of nostalgia. Moreover, the migration was not altogether a propitious mobility but sometimes a forced one, as in the case of slavery and foreign invasion.

Now a days in the post-modern experience, the migration can be viewed as a fusion phenomenon, in which earlier concepts like home, roots, culture and identity have turned fluid. The concepts of cultural alienation as 'nowhere man' and 'belonging everywhere' suggest new kinds of resistances but it also signifies freedom and desire to explore new possibilities and ventures. Early displacement and dislocation can now be visualized as a privileged identity with the arrival of multiculturalism and multinationals. Andrew Smith traces history of new migration and outward expansion as:

In many respects this new migratory and interlinked global order is the culmination of a history that begins with the emergence of capitalism and its outward expansion from Europe, firstly in search of new trade routes, later for the manpower and raw materials that fed the industrial revolution, and contemporary in the development of a new international division of labour.³

The loss and separation perceptible in the first generation of migrants is celebrated by the next generation, of hybrid populace as in the loss of cultural inflexibility and rigid identity. The disrupted and disoriented process of migration turns out to be a prime *raison d'être* of regeneration in the adopted culture that avows its novel individuality as 'diaspora'.

'Diaspora' is a Greek word, which means to disperse or scatter. John McLeod views diaspora as 'composite communities – much influenced by past migration history.'⁴ In the words of Robert Cohen, diaspora can be understood as "communities of people living together in one country who acknowledge that 'the old country'— always has some claim on their loyalties and emotions."⁵ In past history the term diaspora has a limited connotation

2. R. Radhakrishnan, *Diasporic Mediations: Between Home and Locations*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1996, p.175.
3. Andrew Smith, "Migrancy, Hybridity, and Postcolonial Literary Studies", Neil Lazarus (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*, pp.242-243.
4. John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, Manchester University Press, New York (South Asian edition), 2007, p.207.
5. Robert Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, UCL Press, 1997, p.ix.

and refers to the Jewish experience of exile and displacement from their homeland. According to the recent emerging post-colonial studies, diaspora is formulated sort of subsistence, in which the actual experience of the migrant population lasts much beyond the actual journey between two places. The migrated population is exposed to isolation, segregation and discontinuity. They are forced to lead a marginalized sort of existence, physically and mentally alienated from the norms and practices of their adopted lands. Although the diasporic movement has been the accepted norm of existence since pre-history, but with the advent of the process of colonialism the movement accelerated considerably. Colonialism itself is a diasporic movement involving the settlement of the white population, which scattered throughout the globe. Moreover the colonial phenomenon of slavery and indenture labour also generated various diasporic movements, from the continents of Asia and Africa towards European and American continents. The next generation or the descendants of the diasporans clustered throughout the globe, resulting in distinct hybrid or dual culture with adaptation to the norms of the adopted land, yet retaining ties with their native cultures.

Due to the generational differences migrants and their next generation occupy different positions, but still rootlessness and feeling of displacement is perennially etched in their respective psyches. Not much accommodated and allowed to settle, with rampant racial discrimination the migrants with similar identities are forced to cluster themselves into a group to accommodate into this perilous sort of existence. Moreover as such groups share similar diasporic experiences and a strong native ties, they disembody themselves from the wider cultural phenomena and settle for a hybridised, creolised sort of cultural affiliations. The hostility of the host societies also forces the migrants to carry the burden of nostalgic past and native attachments. James Clifford effectively captures the unresolved cultural anxiety of the diasporic population, "Diasporic culture mediate, in a lived tension, the experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering/desiring other place."⁶ Also with the reorientation of the cultural norms of the West, particularly in the post-Harlem Renaissance period of 1965, the term culture has lost its singularity. The newly sprung diasporic communities in the West have refused to assimilate in the cultural norms of the host country. C.W. Watson observes that 'while committed to the laws

6. James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in Late Twentieth Century*, Harvard University Press, Harvard, 1994 p.311.

and norms of the society at large', the diasporic community 'saw no need to abandon their religious traditions or their cuisines or their languages.'⁷

In the recent era diasporic studies offer a demanding area of research in the field of literature and cultural studies. It is now turning out as an open field of enquiry, hitherto considered as narrative of loss, nostalgia and retribution. With the emerging cross-cultural and multicultural paradigms, diasporic studies have transpired as a broad canvas, explicating various strategic and reciprocal relationships between homelands and adopted lands. To use the Rushdiean phrase, these texts 'will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; – not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands.'⁸ The identity is dual, so the nomenclature also tends to be defining the double identity in indispensable absolute terms. Recent diasporic movements are navigated in the hunt for better life, enhanced climatic and sustaining conditions, so the mobility tends to be progressive in terms. In tracing the trajectory of the diasporic paths there can be witnessed a migratory lure, ascribed to well-regulated life situations and motivated economic sway.

Thus central to all diasporic establishment and movements is a tendency of races and cultures from under-developed to developing, and from developing towards developed. This economic trajectory manifested itself in all the progressive diasporas of twentieth century. Moreover, colonialism has a major role to play in the culmination of a multi-ethnic world with so-called 'melting pots' and 'salad-bowls' or as in the words of Benedict Anderson, the 'alchemic absorptions' of multi-diasporic communities.⁹ All the major developed or near-developed countries and continents have witnessed the formation of diasporic communities and notable among these are France, Britain, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, United States, Canada, Australia, Russia, West Indies, Malaya, Fiji, Mauritius, Philippines, New Zealand and Eastern and Southern Africa. Stuart Hall observes that such places are 'the juncture-point where the many cultural tributaries meet, the 'empty' land where strangers from every other part of the globe collided.'¹⁰

7. C.W. Watson, *Multiculturalism*, Viva Books Private Limited, New Delhi, 2002, p.5.

8. Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*, Granta, 1991, p.10.

9. Benedict Anderson, *Imaginary Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London, 1983, p.22.

10. Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", Patric Williams and Laura Chrisman (eds.), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory : A Reader*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hertfordshire, 1993, p.400.

The early isolation of expatriation is now channelised into full-fledged diasporic communities, clustered around individual centralities and retaining ties with the native culture, yet manifesting strange adaptation to the globalised scenario of the multi-cultural world.

The dual individuality of the diasporic personage is vital towards the understanding of his/her cultural constraints and the wider global choices. Population from developing third-world countries have migrated to the European and American continents since the first decade of the twentieth century, which culminated in the ambivalent cultural and racial scenarios of the adopted nations. Derek Walcott avers it as 'Adamic' relation of the migrant with the host world but it does not suggest simple return to innocence as he feels "the apples of its second Eden have the tartness of experience."¹¹ This imported colonized culture blended with the coloniser's indigenous to motivate new acculturation process. Writers of the canonical text *The Empire Writes Back* deem that "the relation between the people and land is new, as is that between the imported language and the land."¹² Positively speaking, such diasporan communities have afforded immense contribution in the creation of the modern nation-states like U.S.A., Canada, Australia, West Indies and others. People from commonwealth countries or the ex-colonies like China, India, Japan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and others have migrated and fashioned the diasporic communities throughout the globe, particularly in the developed nations. Moreover the strong presence of the succeeding generations of the bonded labourers and slave populace of the late 19th and early 20th century in the land of erstwhile colonisers have also assisted to the diversity of the land.

In recent times the idea of the diasporic identity has gained recognition and is adopted by writers, critics and anthropologists as the rightful affirmation of their hybrid identity. This homogeneous restructuring of the identity is prolific in understanding the cultural designation of such hybridised community and their socio-ethnic mores. This fluid identity is fashioned and re-fashioned within the academy under various categories like diasporans, immigrants, uprooted, expatriates, exiled, dislocated and more recently as Anglo-

11. Derek Walcott, "The Muse of History in Coombes" (ed.) Quoted by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, Routledge, London, 1989, p.135.

12. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, Routledge, London, 1989, p.135.

Americans, Anglo-Canadians, Commonwealth, multicultural and what not. Stuart Hall maintains that this diasporic experience can be defined "by the recognition of necessary heterogeneity and diversity – by a conception of identity which lives with and through, not despite difference, by hybridity. Diasporic identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference."¹³ Thus in the cultural mappings of these Western nations, there is substantial amount of third-world presence. These nations have misplaced their cultural homogeneity forever, with the influx of people from once-colonised nations and races. At the end of the 20th century western nations can brag a wide variety of diasporic communities and ethnicities that can trace its origin to the continents of Asia, Africa and South America.

South-Asian diaspora is one among the leading diasporic communities of the world. South Asia or widely known as Southern Asia, encompasses the sub-Himalayan countries and the territories on their west side. The key countries in this geographical allotment are India, Pakistan, Iran, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Maldives, Bhutan, Afghanistan and Myanmar. South Asian diaspora shares a pluralistic and paradoxical relation with the western nations as they are all erstwhile British colonies and have adopted English language owing to the British imperialistic policies. The South Asian migration or the British colonial subjects to the Western Hemisphere started in the mid of the 19th century when the region was under the imperialistic territory of the western colonial powers. With the abolishment of slavery in the European colonies the scarcity of labour propelled the migration of indenture labour to the cash-rich plantations of Guyana, Trinidad, Surinam and Mauritius. The need of plantation workforce was supplied from North-central and North-eastern India, though a considerable amount of labour also migrated from Tamil-speaking regions. In the last quarter of the 19th century South Asians migrated to British East Africa to build railway tracks but they also provided other services like administrative jobs, shopkeepers and moneylenders. Most of these migrants hailed from the rich Indian states like Punjab, Gujarat and Goa.

Benedict Anderson has argued that nation is an 'imagined political community'¹⁴. Hence the term nationalism can be seen as a movement,

13. Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", Patrick Williams and Laura (eds.), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, p.402.

14. Benedict Anderson, *Imaginary Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London, 1983, p.5.

which includes the construction of the idea of the nation and identification of the communities, which belong and don't belong to it. Indian nationalism at the start of the 20th century or in the last decade of the 19th century was an imagined community, not heading towards any unique or specific form. The nation was divided along the lines of caste, territories, religion, creed, colour, language and what not. The nationalistic phenomenon was still in the nascent state. Moreover the colonial powers adopted the golden imperialistic strategy of 'divide and rule'. As a consequence the colonized individuals belonging to different Indian states, lacked any nationalistic submission or commitment. On the other hand western colonial nations exhibited strong racial stability, exhibiting strong cultural ties and *faux* nationalism. Hence migration to their lands was an uphill task, and can only be terminated by either western appeasement or headstrong determination to counter resistance.

Punjab, the land of five rivers is geographically situated on the northernmost frontiers of post-partition India. Known as *daar-e-Hind* (doorway to India), the land in pre-partition era was vulnerable to the conquerors from the Middle East Asiatic region. Due to this unique setting the land has always allured the mind of conquerors and invaders since medieval period. So the area became the meeting-ground for various civilizations of the past and hence is always open to new challenges of history. The Punjabi migration to the west started at the inception of the 20th century or to be precise, in the last decade of the 19th century. Twentieth century was the period of flux in geo-political awareness among the colonised countries of the world. Punjab at the start of the 20th century has gathered a massive and audacious history of resistance to foreign invasions and aggressive heroism, along with rich cultural heritage. Around 15th century Guru Nanak Dev founded the Sikh religion which promptly came into prominence and shortly afterwards Maharaja Ranjit Singh reformed the state into a powerful kingdom, invincible to any foreign invasion. Although in post-Ranjit Singh phase of the history of Punjab, the land got disorganised but still the British imperialistic powers got identified with the atypical virtues of the people of the land. Punjab owing to the unique religio-geographical advantage came under the western eye of the colonial officers.¹⁵

Ethnic and cultural studies have been the major impetus to Post-

15. For detailed analysis of the history of the land, see
<<http://www.punjabonline.com/servlet/library.history>>

Colonial studies. In the present multicultural world there is some individuality and uniqueness preserved in every culture, although this disparity is steadily on the wane. Elleke Boehmer observes it as 'endorsing an international, democratic vision of multicultural mixing and individual self expression'.¹⁶ As a result many cultures emerge to the core, which have demonstrated tremendous grit and dynamism in the face of adversities. Many races and communities and their experiences come to our mind like Jews, Blacks, and Palestinians who desire to proliferate and valorise their cultural identity through their literature, which Elleke Boehmer denotes as 'small texts on a world-wide stage'¹⁷. Within the Indian nation also, many successful ethnicities and communities have displayed decent adaptation to the multicultural *mores* of the West and have migrated to alien lands. The most prominent among these are the indentured labour of mid 19th century from the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to the islands of West Indies and Mauritius, the Gujaratis who have considerable amount of population in New Zealand, US and Canada, the Bengalis in the US, the Tamils in Asian countries of Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand and Philippines and the most considerable Punjabi diaspora scattered all around the globe. Punjabi depiction in today's cosmopolitan, English novels is also crucial in this aspect. Punjabis are one of the most progressive, economically prosperous, culturally rich and enterprising races of the world who have excelled in every sphere of life starting from agriculture to industry, business, education, army, technical spheres and above all in arts and literature. Punjabi's pride in native history, tradition, folk, religious teachings, language—indeed all their literary appraisals stem from their roots and a strong sense of bonding with a glorious past.

Punjabi experience in Indian writings in English is not of much long standing. The writers of this area have shown decent dependence on regional languages—like Punjabi and Urdu but their experience with English as a literary language is much bleak. Only in the last three decades significant English writers have emerged from this part of the country. Punjabi culture has now emerged as one of the dominant cultures within and outside the nation and have excelled in all crucial fields like agriculture, industry, education, migration, technology but as far as literary inclination in English

16. Elleke Boehmer, *Colonialism and Postcolonial Literatures*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1995, p.229.

17. Elleke Boehmer, *Colonialism and Postcolonial Literatures*, p.257.

is concerned, they lag behind. Moreover the strong native language Punjabi is continuously enhancing its prospects throughout the globe, which provides a second choice to writers who are already duality ridden. Withstanding the dominance of the regional languages, writers of late, are adopting English as a medium with their fictional narratives dipped in Punjabi colour and settings. To name only few Mulk Raj Anand, Khushwant Singh, Chaman Nahal, Balraj Khanna, Himmat Gill, Nina Sibal, Gurcharan Das, Raj Gill, Partap Sharma and many others have created a comfortable niche in Indian fiction and now they are not considered as subaltern, rather they have raised considerable voice on the key issues *vis-a-vis* Punjabi experience in the post-war phase of world history. Moreover, the Punjabi diaspora spread all around the globe have also contributed to the Anglo-Indian fiction with many promising writers like Meera Syal, Sadhu Singh Dhami, Belinder Dhanoa, Leena Dhingra, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Surjeet Kalsey, Lakshmi Gill, Rattan Mann, Atamjit, Jacqueline Singh, Ravinder Randhawa, Ajmer Rode, Navtej Bharti, Iqbal Ramoowalia and others.

The Punjabi diasporic writers have shared common transplanted ethnicity among the other Indian diasporic writers. The broader Indian diasporic writers and their literary ponderings have received some critical attention while the sub-group of Punjabi diasporic writers are not taken much seriously, although the diasporic population of Punjab has outnumbered all other visible diasporas. Indian diasporic writers like V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry, Jhumpa Lehri, Bharti Mukherjee, Anita Desai, Hari Kunzru, Chitra Divakaruni, Arnold Itwaru, Kiran Desai, Anita Rau Badami, G.V. Desani and others have received ample critical attention and are among the best known Indian and global writers. On the other hand Punjabi diasporic writers are a neglected lot. Though the writers have engaged themselves in intellectual aerobics ever since their arrival in the West and have documented novel utterances in a novel terrain, but due to linguistic hurdles their voices have passed as unobtrusive. In Punjab the local language Punjabi is the basic model of expression, which handicaps the writers and scholars to interact with outer diasporic cultural worlds within the nation and outside. Sizeable body of Punjabi diasporic writers writing in native Punjabi language have emerged and have gained subtlety in comprehending literary consciousness of the diasporic identity and have dealt with it suitably. Kartar Singh Duggal feels that these works are "like a whiff of fresh air, introducing new themes, painting scenes of life in far-

away lands and experimenting with unfamiliar techniques practised abroad."¹⁸ These writers include Amarjit Chandan, Ajeet Cour, Daljit Nagra, Veena Verma, Dominic Rai, Shivcharan Gill, Yash, Sathi Ludhianvi, S.S. Santokh, Bhupinder Purewal, Ravinder Ravi, Amar Jyoti, Dev, Rupinderpal Singh Dhillon and others but they have to cover long distance to proliferate in the hybrid-pastiche cultural climate of the host countries. Manjit Inder Singh believes that "these efforts have yet to travel a long way to incorporate into consciousness, cultural milieu, history and myths of the host country."¹⁹

Now in this sub-section of the paper the focus will be on the Punjabi diaspora in Canada, which is part of the broad South-Asian diaspora in Canada. Punjabis in Canada have a century long history of resistance and survival. The Sikh religion is one of best-represented non-Christian religion in Canada and the Sikhs/Punjabis form the largest majority among the South Asian diaspora in Canada. Sikhs/Punjabis made their first appearance in the Maple Land around the close of 19th century.

The Sikhs were the loyal members of the British imperialistic army. In the two Anglo-Sikh wars of 1845 and 1849, the British "got a taste of Sikh prowess. After defeating and annexing their kingdoms, the British recruited Sikhs in large numbers for the British Indian Army. Therefore, whenever the British were engaged in hostilities, Sikh soldiers constituted the vanguard."²⁰ In 1897 the Indian government sent Sikh Lancers and Infantry regiment to London to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. During their return journey through Pacific they commuted the stretch from Montreal to Vancouver through train. The hungry 'sons of the soil' witnessed vast Canadian Prairies, Great Lakes, thick forests and equitable climate, which promised a rich potential. The land lured them and some deserted their regiments and stayed there, while the others came back to the land in batches, through various other channels. Since then the Canadian wilderness enchanted the agrarian youths of Punjab, as California to the gold seekers. At the outset, Government of Canada instead of harnessing this youthful

18. Kartar Singh Duggal and Sant Singh Sekhon, *A History of Punjabi Literature*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1992, p.403.

19. Manjit Inder Singh, "Between History and Cultural Politics: Reflections on Punjabi Writing of the Diaspora", in Makarand Paranjape (ed.), *Diaspora: Theories, Histories, Texts*, Indialog Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2001, p.104.

20. Khushwant Singh, Introduction, in Surjit Kaur, *Amongst the Sikhs: Reaching for the Stars*, Roli Books Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2003, pp.9-10.

vigour turned hostile and passed legislation in 1908 and 1910 which virtually put an impasse to the East Indian migration in Canada.²¹

1914 was a colossal year in Sikh immigration to Canada when under the leadership of Baba Gurdit Singh, a fateful Japanese chartered ship *Komagata Maru* carrying 376 East Indians (346 Sikhs) anchored at the Port of Victoria, British Columbia. The immigrants were not allowed to land aboard the ship and were forced to return to their native land with the aim to uphold Canada as a 'white man's country'. The event had political repercussions, both in India and Canada and the image of Canada stood tarnished at the world level. From 1920 to 1945 only fewer Punjabi/Sikh migrants entered Canada. In post-war period the Canadian laws facilitated the migration and hence more and more Sikhs entered the Canadian land. The early migratory Sikh population worked at dairy farms, lumber mills, berry orchards, railway construction sites, canal digging sites, logging operations and other menial jobs. They were not allowed to do any white collared job and early diasporans dwelled at the outskirts of the towns and provinces in tents and labour halls.²² Nowadays Sikh/Punjabi diaspora is not exposed to enormity and ruggedness of the Canadian backdrop but are comfortably settled with esteemed jobs like doctors, engineers, pharmacists, agriculturists with sizeable land holdings, teachers, nurses, civil servants, merchants, lawyers and also the most prominent, as transporters. They have maintained their self-respect intact and have prided themselves as Canadian Sikhs/Punjabis.

The initial entree of the Sikhs/Punjabis to Canada sounds interesting upto the epic dimension. Now in 21st century, the rough approximation suggests that around 400,000 Sikhs/Punjabis are permanently settled as Canadian citizens. A further detailed investigation of the figure verifies that the number is much less than the actual population. Moreover, many immigrants are in-pipeline for the green signal of the immigration executives, back at home in Punjab, to unite with their akin in Canada. The migration laws are relaxed in the last two decades of the 20th century to facilitate the entry of this dynamic community, which has made heroic contribution to

21. See Kuldeep Singh, "Sikh Diaspora in Canada" a lecture, *An Evening at Oakland University*, Michigan, USA. Compiled by Kulwant Singh, 7 March 2002.

<http://www.sikhreview.org/sikh_diaspora.htm>.

22. See Kuldeep Singh, "Sikh Diaspora in Canada" a lecture, *An Evening at Oakland University*, Michigan, USA.

Canadian nation-building. In many provinces like Toronto and Vancouver, Punjabis have outnumbered all other diasporic ethnicities to assert themselves as *numero uno* diasporic unit. In such provinces the Punjabi language becomes the second language to national language English, surpassing other claimants like French and Chinese. The signboards and milestones in these provinces are highlighted in Punjabi thus attesting the huge bearing of the Punjabi indigenous culture to these multicultural provinces. In such provinces there is high-peril for the indigenous White culture, who are or may turn as minority in the coming decade.

No study of South Asian diaspora in Canada can claim validity without paying apt consideration to the Sikh/Punjabi diaspora in Canada. Recently, in 1997 the Canadian government identifying the unique role of the Sikh community in Canada's progress have commemorated the century of Sikh migration to Canada through 'Centennial Foundation'²³. The major aims of the organisation are to promote an awareness and understanding of various Sikh milestones. The Canadian postal department has issued a glossy stamp ticket with the inscription of *Khanda*, the insignia of the Sikhs, to pay tribute to the multi-talented community and their exploits, for over a century. In the story of evolution of modern Canada, the history of the Sikhs has almost been a forgotten episode but now the organisation is committed to surrender due entitlement to this sturdy diasporic unit. Hence all the cultural and literary critics, both within India and outside, who have studied South-Asian Canadian diaspora and have not entitled the due space to Punjabi/Sikh diaspora stands invalidated in the light of truth.

In one such article "One Foot in Canada and Couple of Toes in India"²⁴, by esteemed academic Makarand Paranjape from JNU, Delhi, I was trying to map the exact location in the diasporic equation of Punjabi diaspora *vis-a-vis* other Indian diasporic ethnicities. The research by Paranjape pivots around Uma Parmeswaran's observation in her two articles "Ganga in Assiniboine: Prospects for Indo-Canadian Literature" and "Literature of the Indian Diaspora in Canada: An Overview". Parmeswaran in her study offers broad chronological description and divisions of different phases of migration, of South Asians to West. Firstly in her former critique, she has identified

23. For details See < <http://www.centennialfoundation.org> >

24. Makarand Paranjape, "One Foot in Canada and Couple of Toes in India", in Makarand Paranjape, (ed.), *Diaspora: Theories, Histories, Texts*, Indialog Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2001, pp.161-170.

four distinct phases of immigrant experience. In the very first phase she enlists the migrants who encountered 'the vastness and harshness of the Canadian landscape'²⁵. Here she feels that the South Asians (including Punjabis/Sikhs) have missed out totally. But here Parmeswaran's research is totally quashed, as she is unable to corroborate with the rough diasporic experiences of the Sikh community around the turn of 19th century. In her latter critique also she has eclipsed the pioneering migratory struggle of the Punjabis/Sikhs in Canada as land-greedy farmers' quest for a virgin land.

Amongst the South Asian socio-religious communities, the Punjabi/Sikh diaspora is innovator/pioneer in every aspect. The early migrants faced privations of the rare order. They never went to the cities but were forced to reside around the outskirts of the cities in makeshift settlements. The cremation was not allowed and they were forced to perform the last rites of the deceased in the middle of the night, in some thick forest areas. Even the place of worship (Gurudwara) was also not sanctioned legally and the Sikhs struggled against the inhuman laws of the White government. Majority of them were not allowed to purchase lands and they were forced to work in lumber mills. The British Press was highly against them and spared no words to denounce them. Moreover, the legislation (in 1908 and 1910) was passed which virtually put an end to all further migration. The incident of *Komagata Maru* (1914) injured the sentiments of the community. The event took a violent contour of riots and murder where sturdy immigrants faced the onslaught; with one Mewa Singh, *Granthi* of Khalsa Diwan gave a befitting reply by murdering William Hopkinson, the officer responsible for deporting the immigrants.²⁶ The incident initiated spark of freedom struggle against British within the Indian nation and abroad, later termed as *Ghadr* Movement. The incident single-handedly shook the British Empire all around the world. In a broader global perspective *Komagata Maru* incident can be termed as the beginning of resistance to the onslaught of the British lust for domination.

The valiant Sikhs endured every impediment in their stride and persisted. Thus the result of their maiden efforts bore fruit within a century. The later

25. Quoted by Makarand Paranjape, "One Foot in Canada and Couple of Toes in India", in *Diaspora: Theories, Histories, Texts*, p.165.

26. For historical details, I am much indebted to Kuldeep Singh and Kulwant Singh, earlier also quoted. See Kuldeep Singh, "Sikh Diaspora in Canada" a lecture, *An Evening at Oakland University*, Michigan, USA.

immigrants have valorised Sikh/Punjabi culture, religion, language, literature, ethnicity and what not. Here it is imperative to discuss the precise situation of the unfortunate voyagers of the *Komagata Maru*, who were not allowed to land and were forced to quit. Standing on the deck they faced hostile 'White' crowd of British Columbia singing "White Canada Forever". Had this racist dogma been given a chance, no South Asian diaspora would have been possible in Canada. So it would not be erroneous to categorize Punjabis as the pioneers in establishing South Asian diaspora in Canada.

There can be no doubt that other resourceful Indian ethnicities have migrated to Canada and have established substantial diaspora like Gujaratis and Bengalis but the Punjabi diaspora have outnumbered all other visible South-Asian diasporas. Now they are no longer engaged in hard labour jobs but are performing essential services like philanthropists, politicians, ambassadors, premiers, bureaucrats, scientists, artists and what not, thus excelling in every relevant field. Even a non-interventionist diasporic academic like V.S. Naipaul, the Noble Laureate, has given suitable lead to the Punjabi/Sikh migrants all around the globe in establishing substantial diaspora in the West. Naipaul states with regard to his own ancestral ethnicity of third or fourth generation of the indentured labour migrants from the state of Uttar Pradesh in India. The ancestors of the 'Noble Laureate' reached the islands of West Indies in the later half of the 19th century and now have scattered and re-scattered throughout the bunch of host countries suitable for migration. Naipaul observes :

... When I compare the achievements of our community, I don't feel it can be said they have achieved much. Although we had a lot of migration of Indians from Trinidad and Guyana to UK ... and some of them went to America, ... and although they had the English language and all kinds of other advantages, I don't think they have done as well as people who have come later from, say, Punjab villages.²⁷

In the light of Naipaul's view it is apparent that Punjabi diaspora in the West, may be in Canada, America or anywhere else, is progressive, dynamic and needs no further claims for identification. Thus, the work of lesser critics stands nullified, who claim to excel in South-Asian diasporas, without dispensing due reverence to the Punjabi diaspora. The Punjabi/Sikh

27. V.S. Naipaul, "Diaspora: A Great Migration", in Aroon Purie (ed.), *Come Home to History, The Millennium Series: India Today*, Thomson Press Ltd., Faridabad, 2000, p. 79.

experience/migration in Canada can be roughly divided into three phases. The first phase consists of early migration at the start of 20th century till Second World War. The earliest recorded migration is in 1897 and can be attributed to the Sikh soldiers of the British Imperialistic Army. This phase of migration is a forced one as the federal laws were unsupportive, yet with sheer determination and grit the migrants survived the psychological and legal onslaught of the White Canadians. Surjit Kaur observes:

They came in search of opportunities and succeeded despite all odds. They looked different. Jobs were difficult to come by and neighbours regarded them with suspicion. Some gave up the outward emblems of their faith; others upheld their traditions, striving to overcome the prejudices of an alien people.²⁸

Both wars played a major role in broadening the perspective of the Sikh community. The contribution of the Sikhs in the victory of Allied Forces brought them into global prominence and widened the European understanding concerning the Sikhs. This newly created European interest in Sikh/Punjabi community facilitated the second phase of Sikh/Punjabi migration to Canada. In the second phase the educated, well equipped and rich Punjabis migrated to Canada with expanded ambitions. Though they were forced to perform menial jobs at the start, yet the unswerving grit to survive and expand took them to economic and cultural independence. They now had decent understanding of the immigration laws and expanded the territory of Punjabi immigration tactfully. The migrants of this phase earned due recognition and respect for their community thus expanding their horizon forever. In the third and last phase of migration i.e. in the 1980's till now, the acrimonious Blue-Star Operation of the 1980's overshadows the relocation. There has been a mass exodus since the 1980's that have culminated the Punjabi as the largest ethnic group amongst the South Asian diaspora. Now migrated Sikhs/Punjabis have started viewing Canada as 'alternative homelands' owing to spiteful religio-ethnic dispute within the nation. Dr. Manjit Inder has described this feeling as "... an intense and passionate revival of the ethnic and religious roots to cement a collective identity of all Sikhs, dispersed worldwide or in India, and to strongly protest against the discriminatory policies of the nation state."²⁹

28. Surjit Kaur, *Amongst the Sikhs: Reaching for the Stars*, Roli Books Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2003, p.15.

29. Manjit Inder Singh, "Between History and Cultural Politics: Reflections on Punjabi Writing of the Diaspora", in Makarand Paranjape (ed.), *Diaspora: Theories, Histories, Texts*, p.100.

In the last section of this paper the spotlight would be on the uncelebrated novel "Maluka" by Sadhu Singh Dhami (1906-1997), which concerns the initial diasporic experience of the Sikh/Punjabi community in the land of Canada. The novel is scarcely a part of the critical discussion in the field of diasporic studies, until recently when the prospective value of the text is slowly being acknowledged. Hitherto, diasporic study was also a neglected area and was never a part of our political or intellectual establishments. The past decade has witnessed a phenomenal dynamism amongst the diasporic communities, made possible by recent advancement in techno-scientific sphere. Not only has this tended in bringing the diasporic communities and their native lands together but has also generated stimulated research in this little explored area. Recent interests in diasporic themes like cultural conflicts, assimilation and homeland have started garnering interest in what could-be a canonical text, a major record of the unsung heroes and their exploits to the virgin territory.

A Sikh sociologist, Sadhu Singh Dhami hailed from the village Piplanwala in Punjab. He migrated to Canada in 1921 at the age of fifteen, later earned a degree of Ph.D. in the subject of philosophy from the University of Toronto. His major publications are "*The Sikhs and their Religion: A Struggle for Democracy*", "*Guru Nanak – Poet and Philosopher*" and "*Your Own Story*". His fictional works include a novel "*Maluka*" and a short story collection "*Piplanwala: Stories and Reminiscences*". From 1942 to 1966, he worked with International Labour Office, Geneva. In his autobiographical novel *Maluka*, the novelist has portrayed the early momentous years of his life in Canada from 1921 to 1942.

The narrative of '*Maluka*' sets off in the Backdrop of the *Ghadr* Movement and Gandhi's non-co-operation movement of the early 20's. The Ghadrites have sown the seeds of sedition from abroad and with this venture in hand; they penned sizeable body of literature, which they smuggled to India regularly. '*Maluka*' retains the vigorous spirit of such literature, yet maintains a wider perspective, radiating all phases of Punjabi life in Canada. Leaving Punjab he found a second home in a small Punjabi diasporic community, in the lumberyard, near Pacific coast of British Columbia. They all worked in a Dominion Lumber Mill. Maluka being the youngest migrant, torn between the values imbibed in the 'Old World' and 'New World'. The novel recounts the inner conflict of a migrant teenager absorbed in the Canadian vastness. At one level '*Maluka*' paints a sobering picture of the struggle of an individual to survive amidst the severity of the hostile surrounds

and at the other, it accounts the untold saga of perseverance of the sturdy race to withstand the heavy odds with tenacity and courage. Set against much-hyped post-colonial canvas, the unforgettable story is the fight against destiny, by Maluka and his compatriots, to achieve some semblance of independence in the foreign land. The work is primarily a sharply drawn look at life, in a fledgling world with the first encounter of the immigrants to Canada's rural frontiers. Through this novel, Dharni recreates a bygone universe borne out of profoundly endeared imagination. The novel is replete with images and incidents of the rare order, hitherto unnoticed in the academic circles or elsewhere.

The novel sights the maiden encounter of the rustic migrants in a lumber mill on the banks of River Fraser, mostly belonging to *Jat* community of landlords in Punjab. Though by the time of Maluka's arrival, most have then have passed the prime of their life, and are around sixty, yet their vigour and tenacity is in full-bloom. Around the marshy banks of River Fraser, they reside in ramshackle sheds called as bunkhouses, 'with tarred paper roofs, each partitioned into small rooms with two bunks in each'³⁰ (9). Perpendicular to their Bunkhouse is a long shed designated as cookhouse with "huge cooking stove in one corner and an oblong heater in the centre. Long tables covered with oil cloth, and wooden benches by them, were set against three sides" (10). Though the exasperating drudge of carrying lumber operations is no easy job, with large logs of wood, deafening sounds of mechanical saws, pulling out the cull, clanging and creaking and turning of the different chain systems, sawdust blowing like miniature sandstorm, yet the vigorous Punjabi *Jats* took it as 'small Edens without an Eve' (17). Some more ferocious veteran stalwarts ex-soldiers of the Indian British Army, like one—Natha Singh, 'strong man with a huge frame', are steadily inching towards old age but tactfully colour their white beards to 'fool the bosses who would not hire an old man'(4).

The burden of the past/nostalgia can be sketched out in any diasporic writing and 'Maluka' is no exception. But still here within the spirited knights of their own order, the burden of lumber over-weights everything else. The evening parleys, the morning confabs after the community reading (many of them are illiterate) of the newspapers and ethnic journals from America

30. Sadhu Singh Dharni, *Maluka*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2000. (All subsequent references to this edition shall be given in the parenthesis within the text with mention of page number).

or Punjab, the Saturday night dissipations, holy Sundays at Gurudwara, occasional huddles regarding religio-political issues back home, brawny remarks against racist administrators and other day to day chores leave no unoccupied situate to nostalgia. Still some like Prem Singh, with a prosaic spirit, look backs to his vanished being, in Punjab with young wife behind. But for the majority past in no way haunts through nightmares and they sleep 'snoring like the exhausted dancing bears in summer months'(20). For young Maluka, a newcomer, past is very much vital and often, the territorial margins merge into the distant past and place.

The smooth silent movement of the water made him feel at home, for the Fraser was very much like the Sutlej gliding through the plains of the Punjab. It was much easier to become intimate with the river than with the unknown people in the strange country (1).

Natha Singh, the grand wise man and Maluka's immediate avuncular mentor in the alien lands, comprehends, and urges him to look ahead. 'You are young and youth is like a river. It always looks ahead.' Here Maluka contemplatively reflects, 'But the river has no memories' (3). Natha, who has borne the dilemma through thick and thin vigilantly responds: "It has memories, Maluka," said Natha Singh with emphasis, "but it doesn't brood over them. It carries them in its quiet flow. But it cannot go back to the mountains no matter how sharp and fresh the memories. It sings its way to the sea"(3).

The Punjabi *Jats* have always expressed them in colourful idioms of the soil, interspersed with hearty, lively abuses, invectives and epithets. It turns extra vivacious while the target is some racist White. The attestation to this terminates in a retort to the lecture by an American lady in Seattle. One Miss Catherine Maynard has denigrated the Indian convention to marry their girls too young, "for they prefer to eat their fruit raw. They produce little food, but many children. Early and excessive sex leaves them impotent at twenty nine" (15). To all the spirited sons of the soil, who have wrestled their life energetically tilling the fertile land of five rivers, the indictment of impotence was most aggrieved. So specific, spicy and heady comments came from all the sides. The first one grilled, 'how did the miss, the virgin, find that out?' (16). The second one promptly reacted that she must have encountered 'some miserable rice-eating Madrasi' (16). They imagined her as a 'desiccated desert goat or a kicking prairie bronco' (16). Gian Chand recommended the quick resolution that 'we must do our duty to Mother India'. Fateh Singh proposes to Maluka to 'write to the Miss to invite her

over here. Most of us are around sixty and we wish to testify to the vigour of India'(16). Their cook ends the prolonged feast of tirade with a proclamation; 'A night with Fateh Singh will make her sing the praise of India in her next lecture' (16).

Isolated from the city life, Sikhs shared their vocation place with diverse ethnic sorts like Chinese, Greeks, Whites and Negroes. The discrimination is rampant here, as well as elsewhere. Sikhs are not allowed to run a machine or 'employed as a grader or a tally man in the lumberyard' (5). Whites were given five to eight cents more for the same job, while the Asian ethnicities of Punjabis and Chinese were discriminated against. Maluka has imagined life here, in Canada as of comfort and convenience, but is befuddled at the existing state of affairs. Although most of them belong to the Sikh community but Britishers consider them as Hindus and neither the Sikhs remonstrate or squabble as 'because the White man's discrimination against them recognized no religious distinctions' (10). The community life of the Sikhs consists of Gurudwara congregation, religio-political addresses, monetary collection to support *Ghadr* party in America, conferring *Akal Takht dictats*, irregular recital of Punjabi poetry and cogitating socio-religious concerns during mealtime.

The indispensable attribute of the Sikh identity is their religious background, distinct ethnic garbs and liveliness. Most of the Sikh migrants in the novel are turbaned youth and some of them have discarded their religio-ethnic identity. They drift from one occupation to another but still are coupled to their community through weekly assemblies at the local Gurudwara. For some religion is a way of life as Bhai Tara Singh who observe the Sikh tenets but for others it is hurdle as Ganda Singh who views the priests of *Akal Takht* as a 'bunch of bloated frogs' (13). Through such images Dhami tries to bring out the ethos of the pioneers and their experiences for the existing generation of Punjabi/Sikh Canadians. The novelist with the exquisite grasp of idiosyncrasies and mores of the early migrants has infused deep labour, borne out of intense passion, for the time and space of the backdrop. Dhami has crafted the novel as a sort of commentary of major historical episodes of the period, particularly related to the *Ghadr* and the Sikh community. Even it alludes to the glorious Sikh history ever since the inception and the unusual adoration of scriptures.

The Sikhs/Punjabis, who have confirmed their versatility at life's all frontages, never pause behind, to substantiate their prowess in event of racial abuse or discrimination by any White. Unlike other migrant

communities, Sikhs never accept discrimination, under any circumstance. Once Maluka and tough Munsha Singh, the wrestler, encountered a group of white racist workers, who abused them racially. This was too much for their Sikh integrity and Munsha gave a fitting reply by defeating the toughest out of the bunch, one Gordie, a boxer. Munsha calmly 'put his arms around him, threw him on the ground and held him there' (32), giving the boxer no choice but to accept defeat. Though the steadfast set of lumberjacks in this Canadian wilderness have missed their chance to educate, but they all advocate education to Maluka, with a distant hope that some day Maluka will impart their experiences through his writings, to the whole world. 'You must write our story' (27), haunts the memory of Maluka throughout the novel. They want Maluka to speak to the world in his writings every experience of theirs. They urge:

'Say that we never took a blow without giving one back, no matter how heavy the odds against us. Say that we stood up for India's freedom, not with words but with arms, when India was still hugging its chains and its leaders begged for petty reforms. Say that we laboured with faith and without fear to brighten the hour of India's awakening. Say that we had the faith to see even in the dark that the daylight was breaking'(27).

They add with a fury on their red-coppery faces and disdain for all those petty minded politicians and racial braggarts:

'Say all that, Maluka, and say it with your blood, hot and boiling. We shall be dead and gone, but our children will read it with pride. India will read it and remember'(27).

Many historical and cultural facts regarding Sikh migration can be gleaned from the book. Numerous descriptions of incidents regarding Sikh culture and the religio-political strife in the last three centuries can be quoted. *Ghadr* revolution is central crux around which the novel pivots. 'They talked about the *Komagata Maru* with subdued anger and a sense of defeat' (24). Most of them feel that their 'loyalty to the British slipped with it' (25). If the *Komagata Maru* incident is shared with deep resentment, their proud faces glow with pride at the mention of the *Ghadr* revolution. They adore the heroes of the *Ghadr* like Lala Hardayal, Jawala Singh, Sohan Singh Bhakna, Kartar Singh Sarabha, Bhagwan Singh, Barkatullah, Santokh Singh, Gurdit Singh Komagatamaru and others. Towards Indian politicians, specially the Congress party, they harbour a grudge for pawning their self-respect to the White. To them, they seem as 'blind bats groping for freedom in the fog of

London' (26). The attitude to Gandhi and his practise of *Ahimsa*, is also no different and Gandhi's disrespect to Guru Gobind Singh's stance of 'raising a sword against unjust' triggers their irk. They say that, 'this rabbit-eared *bania* from Gujarat, our handsome Mahatma, writes that Guru Gobind Singh was mistaken' (33). He appeases the White by 'teaching the Hindus to take the blows from the police with their hands folded in front and prayer in their heart' (33). They say:

"Away with the petitioning flunkies, Indian political leaders . . . Chase away the slave mentality; break the begging bowls! Better the chaos, which produced Guru Gobind Singh and Shivaji than the peace of the grave imposed by the British bayonets, which has produced money-minded middlemen, bootlicking intellectuals and pusillanimous politicians . . . Arise, therefore with your blood boiling and your hands gripping guns. Spitting together you can drown the British in your spittle" (26).

Historico-cultural facts of the Indian and Punjabi life and their ensuing result on the life of the Punjabi migrants can be easily deconstructed. Death of thousands of Indian soldiers, mostly Sikhs, during the First World War at Flanders is reviewed (141). Guru Gobind Singh's holy baptism of the sword, the transformation of 'frail sparrows into fear hawks' (235), embarks the spirit of the new Sikh settlement and its ensuing culture, and is a milestone frequently courted within the narrative. The Second Anglo-Sikh War of 1849, the loss of '*Kohinoor*' to the 'Crown', the end of the Sikh *Raj*, proves a heavy saddle on the chivalrous Sikh perception. When during Maluka's first assignment as a teacher was entrusted to teach a ballad by Henry Newbolt, 'The Ballad of John Nicholson', Maluka felt as if his self-respect is forfeited. He realised that 'the ballad is very hurtful to the pride of a Sikh. There's not a word in it about the bravery of the Sikhs, for even in defeat they fought with amazing courage' (269). Here Maluka submits the eyewitness account by one General Thackwell, of "how the Sikh soldiers caught hold of the bayonets of their attackers with their left hands, and used their right hands to deal furious sword blows to their assailants" (269).

Early migrants are occasionally bewildered at the fluid cultural identity of the West, may admonish it a bit, but prefer to cling to their roots in the alien lands, however hostile the conditions may be. The settlers remote from their native lands, engaged in the conquest of the Canadian wilderness, are still smitten, with their inherent nativity. They dream of a new dawn, back home in India and feel the *Ghadrites* gave them 'a great purpose— the

establishment of a sovereign socialist republic in India'(236). Much under the influence of *Ghadr* movement, they advocate to 'take up arms and cease not to struggle till the goal is reached' (236).

Dhami raises much cerebral issues in the novel in connivance with the post-colonial discourse of the 1980's, though the novel appeared much earlier than the arrival of the theory. The true spirit of the oriental poetry is discussed, much later revived by post-colonial critics. The pioneering contribution of the Orientalists, particularly Indians to the disciplines of art, mathematics, mechanics, literature and philosophy is discussed. The bearing of Oriental knowledge on the minds of Max Muller, Charles Wilkins, Schopenhauer, Edwin Arnold, P.B. Shelley, Sir William Jones, Hegel, Wordsworth, Bopp, Burnouf, Henry Thomas Colebrooke and others is severely debated and laid bare (219-20). The history of *Guru ka Bagh Morcha* and the rise of *Babbar Akalis* are provided a graceful room in the novel (213). The aggressiveness of the Sikh/Punjabi community is considerably emphasised throughout the novel, and narrative is replete with instances to this effect. The centuries old tryst of the 'sons of the five rivers' with fateful Greek warrior Alexander, is eloquently portrayed. Dhami records, 'When Alexander the Great came with his greedy Greeks to plunder us, the Punjabis fought with such ferocity that the Macedonian mad man thought it safer to return home' (209).

Passing references are also given to the folklore of Punjab in form of *Giddha*, *Bhangra*, *Bolies*, *Kisse*, *Waars*, *Dhadis* and other folk arts. Taste for Urdu poetry, early village schools, life as *charwahas* (cattle herdsman), *Ishq Haqiqi* of the Sufi saints, Ghadrates in Moscow, religions of India, the Aryan race, 1857 war of independence, trains in India and other such multifarious issues are scanned in the pages of the novel. The geography of Canada, the White Parliament, the fertile prairies, generous British officers of the Imperialist Army, Darwin's concept of evolution, materialism of the West, impoverished life in shacks also finds place in the parleys of the Punjabi migrants. Thus the novel soars far beyond the fictional limits. It is a vigorous discourse on the socio-historic conditions of the early Punjabi migrants in Canada on one hand, and also a fleeting glance on the gratifying history of Punjab, the land of five rivers. It also turns out to be the autobiography of the central character Maluka who is none else than the writer himself, but it can also be received as the record of Punjabi ethos in the first half of the 20th century.

Here again I would turn to Uma Parmeswaran, the Canadian critic,

who, in her critique "Dispelling the Spells of Memory: Another Approach to Reading our Yesteryears", passingby mentions and then neglects 'Maluka' as she feels, to say in her own words, that 'Maluka' "is set at the turn of the century – 'the last century,' should I say, since we are in the year 2000?"³¹ Here her scholarship stands in doubt as 'Maluka' spans between 1921-1942, and chronicles the first half of the 20th century almost completely. Here she fails to viaduct the fissure of fifty years in a diasporic critique.

The recent appointment of British Columbia's first Punjabi Premier Ujjal Dosanjh is another milestone in Sikh migration, yet it can be examined from various perspectives. The insistence of the White British administrators was to isolate the Sikhs/Punjabis from the Canadian mainstream in the first half of the 20th century, but they are now suitably vindicated when the cultural confines of Canada are reconfirmed and rewritten. Thus the community has traversed a century leap from Komagata Maru' to 'adopted homelands'. Thus 'Sutlej in British Columbia' can be the only befitting reply to the critics who try to outshine Sikh/Punjabi role in present Canadian scenario.

It can be concluded that the vast potentials of the novel '*Maluka*' are still neglected in any sort of critical discussion or debate. The text has not received the vital response of the critics, which it sincerely deserves. The novel establishes the pivotal role of the Punjabi migrants in West. Sikhs/Punjabis have spearheaded South Asian migration to the land of Canada, but even after a century of early Sikh migration the Sikhs are not accorded their rightful status in theory and discourse. "Maluka' is once again all set to 'identify the cat among the pigeons', this time in academy and scholarly debates. Related to the initial adversities and strives of the early migrants, the novel stands in league with major global diasporic fiction like V.S. Naipaul's '*A House for Mr. Biswas*'; Malkit Singh Lopo's '*The Enchanted Prison*'; Harriet Wilson's '*Other Nig*'; Zora Neale Hurston's '*Their Eyes were Watching Gods*'; and Zulfikar Ghose's '*The Triple Mirror of the Self*'. Dhami also stands elated in troupe of Punjabi diasporic writers like Iqbal Ramoowalia, Harjit Atwal, Atamjit and others.

31. See Uma Parneswaran, "Dispelling the Spells of Memory: Another Approach to Reading our Yesteryears" *2000 Proceedings of the Red River Conference on World Literature*, North Dakota State University (Volume 2, 2000 / ISSN: 1533-0842). <http://www.ndsu.edu/RRCWL/V2/uma.html> >

GROWTH OF SERVICE SECTOR AND LIVING STATUS IN PUNJAB

*Parminder Kaur**

Economic development is concerned with changes in the level of living attained in any physical environment. The level of living is the level of satisfaction of the needs of the population assured by the flow of goods and services in a unit of time. Further level of living is distinct from the standard of living. The level of living shows the actual level and standard of living defines a normative level. Level of living of a country is determined by the level of education, level of health and medical facilities and other facilities and services like level of banking system, level of transport, communication and road length and level of leisure and environment etc.¹ In Punjab some districts enjoyed higher level of living while other districts have poor conditions in this respect. The causes of these variations can be many. Different regions of the state have different growth potentials because of differences in educational and health facilities, availability of infrastructural facilities etc.² The paper seeks to examine the sources of variations in the level of living in the Punjab state.

The study is based on secondary data. The concept of level of living has been defined to include education facilities, health and medical facilities and general facilities like banks, roads etc. The indicators used in present study are:

- A. **Education indicators;** which includes literacy rate, number of students in primary schools, pupil-teacher ratio in government primary schools, number of arts and science colleges.
- B. **Health and Medical Indicators;** which includes number of beds in

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1. Ganguly, B.N. and Gupta, D.B., *Level of Living in India: An Inter-State Profile*, S. Chand and Co. Ltd., 1976, New Delhi.
2. Dhillon, S.S., 'Level of Living in Punjab', as quoted in Bawa, R.S. and Rekhi, P.S., *Punjab Economy: Emerging Issues*, G.N.D.U., 2000, Amritsar.

hospitals in Punjab, number of public health centres and average radius served per institution (kms.) in Punjab.

- C. **General indicators;** which includes number of banking offices in Punjab, total road length in Punjab (kms.), number of villages linked with roads. Further, trend of growth rate of all these indicators have been calculated.

Results and Discussion

Education Facilities : For the uplift of a society, education is must. This helps in raising the level of living of population.

Table-1 shows that literacy rate has grown by 1.76 percent per annum during the post-liberalisation period. Not only this wide disparity in the literacy counts between various districts. Thus one can say that inspite of the overriding importance of education as an essential component of national development, the facts regarding the vital sector are indeed and persistent cause for concern. It is in this context, that this paper have tried to look at the changing scenario of primary school student during the period from 1971 to 2000 (Table-2). Number of students in primary schools in Punjab has increased from 8.72 lakh in 1971 to 19.85 lakh in 1980 but after that it decreased marginally to 18.49 lakh in 2000. In the face of rising population growth, it seems something paradoxical. The mushrooms growth of unrecognised unaided primary schools in Punjab, during 1980s and 1990s, might have been one of the possible explanations for such a scenario. Also during the span of three decades i.e. from 1971 to 2000, the pupil-teacher ratio has been between 30:1 and 42: 1. These declining number of students and teachers in government primary schools brings out the fact that a sizeable population of students at the primary level might have shifted to unaided unrecognised so called English medium schools in the rural area of Punjab. Further table-3 shows that though arts and science colleges in Punjab have grown more rapidly after the introduction of reforms, yet the overall growth rate (1977-78 to 2003-04) is as low as 1.14 percent per annum. Evidence shows that advanced countries spend 5-6 percent of their income (GNP) on education while India spends 3.4 percent and Punjab 2.31 percent of its income (SDP). Education being in the social sector, it remains largely public funded. This is also the case in India. But in Punjab, public funds for education are generally disappearing. The state is ranked 22nd among states and union territories in the matter of per capita pubic spending on education.

The process of withdrawal of state funding in education has created a two-fold crisis in education. One, has created a financial crisis for public-

funded institutions such as colleges, universities and schools. They have met this situation partly keeping certain number of teaching posts as vacant and compromising with educational standards.

Health and Medical Facilities: The most civic amenity relates to health care in any area. Together with education, health is the most significant form of investment that can improve human capital. If number of beds in hospitals is considered as proxy variable for health care in Punjab, the performance of this sector does not seem to be favourable. Table-4 indicates that number of beds in hospitals grown only by 0.28 per annum during liberalisation period which is very low. The same fact has been shown by table-5. The rate of growth of number of public health centre is - 0.11 percent per annum during post-liberalisation period. Similarly table-6 exhibits that public health system is not performing satisfactory at all as the growth of average radius served per institution is not only low but falling also.

General Facilities

- I. *Banking Facilities:* Institutional finance is essential for any development programme in Punjab. Table-7 indicates that as comparison of pre-liberalisation growth rate of all districts of banking sector decrease in the liberalisation period. This shows that liberalisation period does not favour banking sector to expand.
- II. *Transport Facilities:* Punjab has possibly the best infrastructure in terms of rail, road and transport network in the country. It scores 210 against a national average of 100 in the infrastructure index of NCAER. However, table-8 reveals that overall growth in road length per lakh of population has decreased in liberalisation period.

Also all the villages in the state are connected with metallic roads as it is clear from table-9. The percentage of villages connected in Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Hoshiarpur, Ferozpur, Faridkot, Muktsar, Mansa, Sangrur and Patiala is 100 percent, while all other districts have above 95 percent of villages connected with metallic roads.

Conclusion

The above discussion shows that in terms of educational facilities, districts of Patiala, Hoshiarpur, Sangrur and Bathinda are at the top; districts of Kapurthala, Amritsar and Ropar are leading in health and medical facilities; and in terms of general facilities/ services, Patiala, Ropar, Kapurthala, Amritsar, Sangrur, Jalandhar, Muktsar and Nawanshehar are more advanced than other districts of Punjab. Faridkot district is most backward district in terms of all facilities.

Policy Implications

From the above discussion, following policy implications can be derived. There exist disparities in the level of living in the districts of Punjab, so effort should be made to reduce these disparities, by providing the required facilities in the districts which are lacking in these facilities. The process of planning should be decentralised in a real sense and priorities as well as sectoral proposals should be made with villages as the unit and later integrated into district and state plans.³

Table-1 : District-wise growth of literacy rate in Punjab
(percent per annum)

	1977-78 to 1990-91	1991-92 to 2003-04	1977-78 to 2003-04
Gurdaspur	3.30	1.78	2.69
Amritsar	3.04	1.48	2.46
Kapurthala	3.00	1.55	2.47
Jalandhar	3.03	1.22	2.33
Nawan Shehar	—	1.72*	—
Hoshiarpur	3.29	1.17	2.45
Rupnagar	2.61	2.28	2.47
Ludhiana	2.87	0.93	2.11
Ferozpur	3.46	2.37	3.12
Faridkot	3.50	2.18	3.05
Muktsar	—	2.33**	—
Moga	—	1.97**	—
Bathinda	4.53	2.80	3.94
Mansa	—	3.48*	—
Sangrur	3.84	2.77	3.54
Patiala	3.30	2.77	3.54
Fatehgarh Sahib	—	1.51 **	—
Punjab	3.23	1.76	2.68

Source: Calculated from the data published by **Statistical Abstract of Punjab**.

* The growth rate belongs to 1992-93 to 2003-04.

** The growth rate belongs to 1995-96 to 2003-04.

3. Dhillon, S.S., *op.cit.*, p.343.

Table-2: Number of students and pupil-teacher ratio in government primary schools in Punjab

Year	No. of students (in lakhs)	Pupil-teacher ratio
1971	8.72	38:1
1980	19.85	41:1
1990	18.57	39:1
2000	18.49	42:1

Source : Government of Punjab, **Statistical Abstract of Punjab**; Various issues.

Table-3: District-wise growth of arts and science colleges in Punjab (percent per annum)

	1977-78 to 1990-91	1991-92 to 2003-04	1977-78 to 2003-04
Gurdaspur	N.A.	1.32	0.66
Amritsar	N.A.	2.19	0.77
Kapurthala	0.79	2.39	1.34
Jalandhar	0.33	-1.09	-0.35
Nawan Shehar	N.A.	2.97*	-
Hoshiarpur	0.66	3.09	2.19
Rupnagar	3.26	1.17	1.42
Ludhiana	0.40	1.97	0.92
Ferozpur	0.76	0.84	0.94
Faridkot	1.31	-20.42	-8.67
Muktsar	-	-2.35**	-
Moga	-	5.73**	-
Bathinda	-	3.24	-0.54
Mansa	-	-	-
Sangrur	2.12	0.48	1.22
Patiala	0.79	-0.21	-0.01
Fatehgarh Sahib	-	4.19**	-
Punjab	0.79	1.91	1.14

Source : Calculated from the data published by **Statistical Abstract of Punjab**.

* The growth rate belongs to 1992-93 to 2003-04.

** The growth rate belongs to 1995-96 to 2003-04.

Table-4: District-wise growth rate of number of beds in hospitals in Punjab

(percent per annum)

	1977-78 to 1990-91	1991-92 to 2003-04	1977-78 to 2003-04
Gurdaspur	3.45	0.59	-1.002
Amritsar	1.87	0.31	-0.69
Kapurthala	3.70	0.37	1.52
Jalandhar	2.48	-0.72	0.22
Nawan Shehar	-	-	-
Hoshiarpur	3.90	0.36	0.44
Rupnagar	3.17	1.82	0.66
Ludhiana	3.05	0.28	1.18
Ferozpur	1.21	0.37	-0.59
Faridkot	6.91	-6.36	-0.87
Muktsar	-	-3.28**	-
Moga	-	1.15**	-
Bathinda	5.11	-1.86	-1.58
Mansa	-	-	-
Sangrur	3.50	-0.78	-0.64
Patiala	0.90	-0.78	-0.64
Fatehgarh Sahib	-	4.34**	-
Punjab	2.70	0.28	0.54

Source : Calculated from the data published by Statistical Abstract of Punjab.

* The growth rate belongs to 1992-93 to 2003-04.

** The growth rate belongs to 1995-96 to 2003-04.

**Table-5 : District-wise growth rate of number of
public health centre in Punjab**
(percent per annum)

	1977-78 to 1990-91	1991-92 to 2003-04	1977-78 to 2003-04
Gurdaspur	8.94	0.07	6.88
Amritsar	-7.58	0.16	5.75
Kapurthala	4.68	0.31	3.27
Jalandhar	8.08	-3.24	4.67
Nawan Shehar	-	-	-
Hoshiarpur	8.70	-1.76	6.19
Rupnagar	8.19	-	6.76
Ludhiana	8.48	-0.87	6.01
Ferozpur	10.21	-0.76	7.45
Faridkot	8.81	-15.16	0.17
Muktsar	-	1.22**	-
Moga	-	3.96**	-
Bathinda	9.09	-3.10	5.14
Mansa	-	1.03*	-
Sangrur	8.06	-0.14	7.32
Patiala	8.37	-1.43	6.48
Fatehgarh Sahib	-	-	-
Punjab	8.48	-0.11	6.91

Source : Calculated from the data published by **Statistical Abstract of Punjab.**

* The growth rate belongs to 1992-93 to 2003-04.

** The growth rate belongs to 1995-96 to 2003-04.

Table-6: District-wise growth of average radius served per institution (Kms.) in Punjab
(percent per annum)

	1977-78 to 1990-91	1991-92 to 2003-04	1977-78 to 2003-04
Gurdaspur	-2.98	-0.01	-0.95
Amritsar	-2.54	-0.002	-0.84
Kapurthala	-1.75	1.402	0.54
Jalandhar	-2.31	-0.0248	-0.73
Nawan Shehar	-	-	-0.18*
Hoshiarpur	-3.18	-0.13	-1.19
Rupnagar	-2.80	-0.05	-1.02
Ludhiana	-2.82	-0.01	-0.89
Ferozpur	-2.78	-0.07	-0.92
Faridkot	-2.56	0.63	-0.54
Muktsar	-	-0.11 **	-
Moga	-	0.51 **	-
Bathinda	-2.29	-0.90	-0.91
Mansa	-	-0.01 *	-
Sangrur	-2.40	-0.10	-0.85
Patiala	-2.32	-0.86	-0.87
Fatehgarh Sahib	-	-0.14**	-
Punjab	-2.53	-0.05	-0.86

Source : Calculated from the data published by **Statistical Abstract of Punjab.**

* The growth rate belongs to 1992-93 to 2003-04.

** The growth rate belongs to 1995-96 to 2003-04.

Table-7 : District-wise growth of number of banking sector in Punjab

(percent per annum)

	1977-78 to 1990-91	1991-92 to 2003-04	1977-78 to 2003-04
Gurdaspur	3.79	0.30	1.59
Amritsar	4.15	0.94	1.79
Kapurthala	4.04	3.40	3.17
Jalandhar	1.98	0.74	1.22
Nawan Shehar	-	1.89*	-
Hoshiarpur	3.72	0.69	1.74
Rupnagar	3.90	3.83	2.89
Ludhiana	1.40	3.04	1.77
Ferozpur	6.18	0.89	2.51
Faridkot	3.60	-11.42	-3.77
Muktsar	-	2.91 **	-
Moga	-	5.59**	-
Bathinda	3.60	0.88	0.31
Mansa	-	2.57*	-
Sangrur	5.73	1.05	2.87
Patiala	3.70	6.99	1.70
Fatehgarh Sahib	-	4.27**	-
Punjab	3.50	2.11	2.33

Source : Calculated from the data published by **Statistical Abstract of Punjab.**

* The growth rate belongs to 1992-93 to 2003-04.

** The growth rate belongs to 1995-96 to 2003-04.

Table-8 : District-wise growth of total road length in Punjab
(percent per annum)

	1977-78 to 1990-91	1991-92 to 2003-04	1977-78 to 2003-04
Gurdaspur	2.82	1.84	1.06
Amritsar	4.32	2.70	1.70
Kapurthala	2.50	1.75	2.38
Jalandhar	3.18	1.21	2.00
Nawan Shehar	-	6.62*	-
Hoshiarpur	3.09	1.45	1.31
Rupnagar	4.27	-0.003	3.02
Ludhiana	5.42	0.52	4.08
Ferozpur	2.56	1.48	1.31
Faridkot	3.60	-11.04	-3.01
Muktsar	-	8.40**	-
Moga	-	6.19**	-
Bathinda	2.98	-0.51	-0.29
Mansa	-	5.11 *	-
Sangrur	3.36	4.17	2.29
Patiala	3.02	-0.09	0.91
Fatehgarh Sahib	-	2.14**	-
Punjab	3.51	2.42	2.57

Source : Calculated from the data published by **Statistical Abstract of Punjab.**

* The growth rate belongs to 1992-93 to 2003-04.

** The growth rate belongs to 1995-96 to 2003-04.

**Table-9 : District-wise growth of villages linked with roads
in Punjab (2004-05)**

(percent per annum)

	Villages linked with roads	Percentage of villages linked with roads
Gurdaspur	1548	100
Amritsar	1184	100
Kapurthala	619	100
Jalandhar	940	100
Nawan Shehar	467	100
Hoshiarpur	1386	100
Rupnagar	844	97.8
Ludhiana	895	99.9
Ferozpur	967	100
Faridkot	163	100
Muktsar	234	100
Moga	322	99.7
Bathinda	280	99.6
Mansa	238	100
Sangrur	696	100
Patiala	1056	100
Fatehgarh Sahib	441	99.5
Punjab	12280	99.8

Source : Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 2005.

BOOK-REVIEWS

BOOK-REVIEW – I

***Without Fear : The Life and Trials of Bhagat Singh*, by Kuldip Nayar, Harper Collins Publisher India, 2007, pp.xvi+246, Price Rs. 395/-.**

Bhagat Singh and his heroism is a tale which has been passed from generations. Probably the British did a mistake by hanging him, as it aroused the youths to fight against the imperial British rulers in India. Bhagat Singh is a name which still stirs the consciousness of the people even after more than seventy five years of his martyrdom. However people are not aware about some of the facade of the life of Bhagat Singh. The present work has tried to dig out some of the untold events and issues related to the life of Bhagat Singh.

This work is a revised and updated version of the author's earlier work on the life of Bhagat Singh. Although the author has given selected Bibliography, the lack of the exact citation and notes has made the book a bit little useful for the researchers. Citations have been made from the letters of Bhagat Singh and other related source without the reference of exact work, publications, page number etc. However, the author's quest for search of the material from Pakistan to London, to the relatives of Bhagat Singh and to his other accomplice is quite commendable in the light of little work available in the field.

Author seems to justifying the title by saying that Bhagat Singh's mind was free from fear because he believed that 'Revolutionaries have to die, because the cause they represent is strengthened by sacrifice not by an appeal in court'(p. 2). The author seems skeptical about why Bhagat Singh was given the job to shoot Scot? There were several trained shooters in Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA). The author also has his doubt, if Sukhdev, the master strategist, wanted to get rid of Bhagat Singh due to his growing popularity? Initially Bhagat Singh was not in the bomb throwing party set to move to the Central Assembly. Due to Sukhdev's comment to him as a coward, Bhagat Singh insisted to be part of it. However, author does not seem fully convinced about it.

Nayar has tried to reflect upon the Bhagat Singh's ideas about country's composite tradition. What held people together was not religion, race or language but a certain way of life that reflected one's diversity and individuality at the same time. It was a shared experience of involvement and the spirit of tolerance and accommodation. Nayar has rightly focused on the great intellectual mind of Bhagat Singh regarding syncretic tradition. Bhagat Singh believed that "a pluralistic society required a secular approach; even a bit of bias could contaminate the nation" (p. 167). Swami Vivekanand and Swami Ramtirtha were inspirational personality for Bhagat Singh as both believed in the assertion of man and not in selfishness. It's quite interesting to observe here that Bhagat Singh was aware about the Communitarian and tolerant Vivekanand, unlike the Sangh Parivar's Hindutvavadi Vivekanand.

When revolutionaries were confused with the idea of revolution, Bhagat Singh corrected them by saying, "revolution does not mean an upheaval but implies the programme of systematic reconstruction of society on a new and better adopted basis often necessitating complete destruction of the existing state of affairs" (p.51). Bhagat Singh's definition of revolution is significant which he narrated during his trial. In the response of the Judge's question he said, "By revolution we mean the ultimate establishment of an order of society, which may not be threaten by such breakdown and in which the sovereignty of the proletariat should be recognized and a world federation should redeem humanity from the bondage of capitalism and misery of imperial war" (p.80). According to Bhagat Singh, "Revolution was not a philosophy of despair or the creed of desperadoes. It was a vital living force that was indicative of eternal conflict between the old and the new; between life and death, between light and darkness. There was no concord, no sympathy, and no rhythm without revolution. Revolution was law, revolution was order and revolution was truth" (p.90). It's quite clear from the above narratives that the works and deeds of western revolutionaries and thinkers had a great impact on the mind of Bhagat Singh and he was not merely a enthusiastic youth but a matured one who was aware about what and why of his deeds and thought?

Bhagat Singh's trial did enough damage to the prestige of the Raj. Nayar feels that Bhagat Singh's adoption of the Gandhian method of fast in jail for prison reform shows that he was not completely disillusioned by the non-violent methods of Gandhi. However, this is also important to note that, that was the only tool available to Bhagat Singh as the last resort, since he

was in confinement. The issue, of hunger strike by revolutionaries and inhuman conditions in jail were raised in the Central Assembly by M.A. Jinnah. The author is quite convinced that the wonderful thing which the hunger strike did was to involve the masses consciousness politically and invoke their patriotic feelings and in this way it gave a push to the national movement of Gandhiji. Despite their differences the revolutionaries respected Gandhiji for the awakening he had brought to the country.

Ifs and buts are the unanswered part of the history. So Nayar also believes that if Jai Gopal and Hansraj Bohra, the two members of the Central Committee of Hindustan Socialist Republican Army(HSRA) would not have turned approver then, it was beyond doubt that the British government would ever had proved anything against Bhagat Singh and others, since there were no witnesses, no direct evidence of their involvement. The author's main contention is that the whole trial was a sham. The judge, the prosecutor and the police bent every law in the book to pronounce a death sentence. What better can be expected in a colonial state?

When the appeal was filed in Privy Council, against the death sentence, one of the legal luminaries of Britain, D.N. Pritt took the cause of Bhagat Singh and attempted to prove that the tribunal which awarded the sentence was invalid as section 72 of the Government of India Act, 1915 gave the Governor General unlimited powers to set up a tribunal on three conditions—one, there must be an emergency; two, the ordinance must be for the peace and good government of British India; and three, the ordinance must be within the legislative power of the Indian Legislature. None of these conditions were existed (p.138). However Privy Council upheld the judgement of the tribunal.

Nayar strongly believes that no matter how much emotional sentiment the death sentence of Bhagat Singh created, Gandhian method of revolution had a long but sure goal, the revolutionaries had none. That's the very controversy why Gandhiji did not made enough attempt to save the life of Bhagat Singh? The reason was obvious. Mahatma Gandhi had no doubt about the bravery and patriotism of Bhagat Singh, but the methods used by them were anti-thesis to his own and that's why although he requested Lord Irwin to commute his death sentence, but never insisted for the pardon. Bhagat Singh firmly believed that, "Alien rule could not be defeated wearing kid-gloves; an iron fist was required" (p.158).

From the perspective of British Government, revolutionaries were terrorists. The author has aptly discussed how Bhagat Singh did not favour

terrorism. Bhagat Singh believed that killing was senseless since it often targeted the innocent. Acts of terrorism were meant to display power and win popularity. Revolution was an act of defiance not of violence. Thus he regarded human life sacred. He believed his mission as an ideological war. Terrorism did not go beyond the limits of revenge. It was anger against an individual not the establishment. It aggravated violence and side traced the issue of social transformation. It only instilled fear. True, courage was involved but not idealism. Terrorism lowered society in its own eyes (pp.158-59). However revolutionaries justified violence as it was a catharsis for the oppressed and a cleansing force. It freed the subjugated from their inferiority complex, their despair. It made them fearless and restored their self-respect (p.159).

Bhagat Singh's transformation into an atheist was accentuated by number of events and happenings. Although a devout believer in the beginning, he saw the impact of the withdrawal of Non-cooperation movement which led to communal riots between Hindus and Muslims. What shocked Bhagat Singh most was that the people who participated together in the movement for common cause turned thirsty for each other's blood in the name of religion. And that shows that during movement they never fought as Indians nor they fought on the ground of humanity (p.166).

The public outcry on the execution of Bhagat Singh and his comrades was immense. People wanted to know what the Indian National Congress did to save the life of Bhagat Singh. At one point of time during Gandhi-Irwin Pact, the Viceroy virtually agreed verbally to commute death sentence into life, but later on he withdrew from his earlier position since the senior British I.C.S. officers threatened to resign *enbloc* if the three men were not hanged (p. 173). Another related story the author brings to the fore that actually Viceroy had sent orders for commutation to Lahore Central Jail through a telegram, but the bureaucrats delayed its transmission. Such details are little known and quite interesting.

Mahatma Gandhi's words after the execution of Bhagat Singh the author aptly quoted- - - - "Bhagat Singh and his comrades have been executed and have become martyrs. Their death seems to have been a personal loss to many. I join in the tributes paid to the memory of these young men. And yet I must warn the youth of the country against following their examples. We should not utilize our energy, our spirit of sacrifice and our indomitable courage in the way they have utilized theirs. This country must not be liberated through bloodshed" (pp.174-75). However Gandhiji

also said, "I would have gladly surrendered my life to the Viceroy to save Bhagat Singh and others" (p.181).

Some of the other revelation by the author about later life of one of the approver Hans Raj Bohra is quite interesting. Bohra who took a career of a journalist, confessed in a letter written on October 7, 1980 to Sukhdev's brother Mathura Das Thapar that "the memory of the twenties accompanies me doggedly, teasingly, hauntingly painfully" (p.190). Vohra even labeled himself as a political leper.

Overall this is all an interesting account and author has done a commendable job. The focus of the work is not only on event associated with the life of Bhagat Singh but also on the ideas and thoughts of Bhagat Singh and his comrades.

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BOOK-REVIEW – II

Martyr As Bridegroom : A Folk Representation of Bhagat Singh,
by Ishwar Dayal Gaur, Anthem South Asian Studies, Delhi, 2008.

In 1999, I.D. Gaur published *Surmedani* (A receptacle of collyrium) which turned material and social anthropology of the Punjab into magnificent poetry. I have some acquaintance with Punjabi and English poetry. I reasonably feel that nothing of the sort has been attempted anywhere else. In the same vein Gaur has reconstructed the folk image of Bhagat Singh. In *Surmedani* Gaur was the maker of the image of our people; in this book the folk have done the making of Bhagat Singh's image and Gaur its elucidator.

Dr. Gaur has delved into contemporary history more in the explication of the image of Bhagat Singh than the working of history leading to his martyrdom.

Our folk has produced a constellation of martyrs in prophets, lovers and rebels. Despite their seeming unlikeness they share an existential characteristic. They have a vision of the "other", the transcendental, the wholly beyond, the holy. The *Bible* says : "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God", (Heb. x.31). Mystery of God equally applies to His creation i.e. the man of God, *moorti Bhagwan*. Mundanely it can be said that Guru Arjan embodied the vision of Sikhism transcending Hinduism and Islam alongwith the pan-Indian spread of Sikhism. The tradition of Guru Arjan refusing to be ransomed from martyrdom with a payment of sum of money ordinarily means that he could not forego his vision and mission. The very thing holds for Guru Tegh Bahadur when the dynastic collusion with the built-in imperial dread of organised group demanded nothing less than martyrdom for the continuation, much less the advancement of the mission. Thus the martyrdom of the Guru, at the mundane level, were historical events; they were equally transcendental i.e. numinous phenomena. Like the ghost story the "wholly other" entices imagination and allures the fancy. The continuing myths about the martyrs of religions in the world strongly emphasizes their numinous character.

Dr. I.D. Gaur refers to the famous lovers of *Qissa* poetry. A line about Hir by Waris sums up what a lover finds in his love : *chalo laila-tul-qadr di karo ziarat Waris Shah eh kum swali da ee.* (*laila*-night; *qadr*-value, *ziarat*-pilgrimage; *swab*-religious merit). *Laila-tul-qadr* is a particular night in the month of *Ramzan* when Muslims fast all the day. It is the 23rd night of *Ramzan* for the *Shias*, 27th for the *Sunnis* when remembering God in this night equals in merit to ordinary devotion for ten months. Hir herself is *laila-tul-qadr* which calls for a pilgrimage to her. The supermundane element in her beauty calls for Ranjha's death which in turn establishes it.

Our contemporary Punjabi poet, Raman casually wrote that my love is more valuable to me than myself. It explained to me in a flash why unsuccessful lovers commit suicide. Death is the meeting point between the natural and the super-natural. That is why it is, alongwith birth, the most celebrated event in life, art and ritual.

Theodor Reik writes of the psychology of Christian martyrs. A martyr bears witness to the fact of his God. The Arabic word is *Shahadat*, i.e. being witness to. One to be martyred is extraordinarily happy in his utmost suffering. Condemned in the present he looks forward to appreciative spectators in the future. His suffering is a kind of theatre.

A Hindu martyr has the consolation of being born again because of his belief in transmigration. Mangal Singh Kuka tells the executing English officer at Malerkotla (p.63), "We shall be born again, hold the sword in our hands, wage a war which will destroy your rule".

Ram Parshad Bismal sang his *ghazl*, *sarfroshi ki tamanna* - eagerness to lay down my head in tears before his hanging not because of the fear of death but because of his sentimentalism about what he was doing for his country. Normally one can assume that a Sikh martyr would feel collaterally obliged to rise above not only the situation but also his self. Sikh theology assumes that a Sikh may be any time called upon to take up the challenge of rising above his usual self like Angad, Amardas, Ramdas and Mani Singh.

What Gaur is emphasizing is that Bhagat Singh was a 'secular' martyr. Reik pointed out that communists could be rationally atheists, yet psychologically believers. Bhagat Singh does not seem to foot the bill. As a proclaimed atheist he could not get the psychological bonus of transmigration. To be an atheist and a martyr demands a far greater commitment to one's cause. For him like millions of Indians, life under foreign rule was not worth

living. Hence martyrdom was self-fulfilment as well as teaching his compatriots a lesson in courage, making the persecutors feel in their heart of hearts that compared to the nationalists they fell far short of humanity when their rule proclaimed otherwise.

Folk representation of the martyrdom of atheist Bhagat Singh was a challenge to folk psychology. The folk could not choose to do a rational reconstruction. Popular mind has come forward with an imaginative construct. Punjabis have changed Shakespear's— it is a consummation devoutly to be wished—into a picture of martyr—bridegroom riding to marry his death mistress. It is significant that he is riding a mare in contrast with the offer of a horse to an adversary in ceremonial surrender. The later ceremony is described a number of times in 'Jassa Singh Vinod' by Ram Sukh Rao. Ceremonial surrender of horse, called *milna* in Sikh historical writing is symbolic of emasculation. Marx talks of emasculation under exploitative class relations (but says nothing about de-feminization). Riding a mare makes it clear that popular imagination pictures a martyr as macho.

Folklorists speak of the elite, learned, urban Great Tradition and Small Tradition of the illiterate masses. It is often not realized because of bookish prejudice that Small Tradition also contributes to Great Tradition. In Sikh history the Small Tradition of the *Janamsakhis* has added significantly to Great Tradition of the scripture. Dr. I.D. Gaur has once again celebrated his people by showing that they have significantly added to the idea of martyrdom. I can't think of a greater honour.

Surjit Hans

144, Phase-XI,

Mohali

BOOK-REVIEW – III

***The Sikhs and Transfer of Power (1942-1947)*, by Dr Kirpal Singh.
Punjabi University, Patiala, 2006, pp.vii + 174, Price: Rs.180/-**

Since the year 1957 Dr. Kirpal Singh has been busy in compiling and publishing books on the event of freedom and partition of India in 1947, especially the division of Punjab and its negative results for the Sikh community. In 1991 he published his work under the title : *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab*. In the year 2001, he gave us a book in Punjabi entitled : *Sikhan De Pakistan Vichon Niklan Di Gatha*. The book under review is a continuation of Dr. Kirpal Singh's interest in the past of the Sikhs when they faced and passed through partition of Punjab in order to let creation of Pakistan as well demand a state in India for themselves. How did it happen ? This is complex problem. This question may be answered if one is sincere enough to understand and show the features of British imperialist politics of Divide and Rule the subcontinent of India. How did the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League respond to the British policy of denying unification to their own Empire is very significant though difficult to show.

But in contrast to the role of the Congress and the League, the role of the Shiromani Akali Dal and some other Sikh political organizations is easier to grasp and demonstrate. Truly, Dr. Kirpal Singh's this book 'deals with the formulation of partition plan, its implementation, the mass migration and its impact' (Foreword).

Dr. Kirpal Singh did not stop at the event of partition of Punjab in Aug. 1947. He has glorified the Lahore Kingdom under Maharaja Ranjit Singh by describing it 'the vast empire extending from the river Sutlej to Khyber pass' (p.01). Further, he has treated the political rise of the Sikhs— during 17th century as 'a bulwark of defence against foreign aggression' for eight hundred years (*ibid*). The book under consideration goes beyond it also. It says the Muslims wanted to convert India in 1947 into 'Muslim state' unlike them, the Sikhs considered Punjab "to be their homeland" (p. 04). For this very reason

the Sikhs had "very bitter memories of the Islamic rule" (*ibid*).

Also Dr. Kirpal Singh describes Punjab as if it was comprised of some Sikh dominated zones. Zone no. 01 was that of districts Amritsar and Ludhiana. Zone no. 02 comprised of the Sikh princely states of Patiala and Faridkot. The next zone was the district of Lahore. The last Sikh zone was a combination of the Canal Colonies of Layallpur and Montgomery (p.06). Impressed by the British colonial historiography through R.N.Cust, Dr. Kirpal Singh shows how Cust in 1859 had called the Punjab region between the rivers Beas and Chenab as 'Sikh Land' or 'the land of Baba Nanak' (*ibid*). The book under review reminds how the Sikhs had started taking the trans-Jhelum area of Punjab as the one dominated by the Muslims (pp.12-13). To avoid this Muslim domination, the Sikh leadership suggested the British to fix the river Ravi as to the Eastern boundary of the Punjab (pp.12-13). With this, the Punjab stood split into two—namely (1) the Muslim Punjab and (2) the non-Muslim Punjab. The word non-Muslim meant a combination of the Sikhs and Hindus. So much so that Master Tara Singh demanded 'Sikh State' from Jinnah also. It was to be in Pakistan (p.20).

Dr. Kirpal Singh's book under consideration throws some interesting light on (1) Major Short and Sardar Baldev Singh (pp.69-70). Short emerges as a link between the Sikhs and the British. The Sardar has been shown as an industrialist popular with Nehru and Patel. Further, the communal rioting among the Sikhs and Muslims was linked up with the princely states also. Even the R.S.S. has joined the Sikhs in committing riots against the Muslims (p. 91).

Had the partition of Punjab and Bengal settle the communal problem of Indian sub-continent ? Dr. Kirpal Singh did not answer it in the positive.

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BOOK-REVIEW – IV

***Sri Guru Arjan Dev*, by Dr Dalbir Singh, Sikh History Research Board (S.G.P.C.) Amritsar, 2006, pp.184 (including message, foreword and preface).**

Guru Arjan was the first martyr of the history of the South Asia. His martyrdom became the starting point of the crisis of the Muslim rule in the subcontinent. Resort to armed defence by Guru Hargobind Sahib (Guru Arjan Sahib's son) prepared the Sikhs and the Punjab to stand up in arms against tyranny and the foreign rule. Finally Guru Gobind Singh (great grandson of Guru Arjan) organised a formal war against injustice and appointed Banda Singh Bahadur to expel the inhuman foreign element from the throne of the subcontinent.

The quad centenary of Guru Arjan Sahib's martyrdom fell on 30th May 2006. Several functions were held and a few projects were initiated to commemorate the historical event. Besides many books were produced to pen down, to re-narrate and re-interpret the contribution of Guru Arjan Sahib.

The S.G.P.C. (which manages hundreds of Gurdwaras) too published a book entitled *Sri Guru Arjan Dev*, authored by Dr Dalbir Singh, Professor and former Chairman of the Department of History, Punjabi University Patiala. This book has six chapters: The Prelude (41 pages), Birth & Early Life (18 pages), Evolution of Institution & Ethical Doctrine (55 pages), Compilation of Adi Granth (20 pages), Martyrdom: Re-interpretation (10 pages), and Epilogue. It also has a bibliography but no index. The chapters have been classified as per formal research methodology used for Master's Degree dissertation, being taught to the students of M.A. and M.Phil. in the universities. Hence, the book seems to be a Master's degree student's dissertation.

The author has very high status job in a university and is expected to produce a high quality research work and S. Avtar Singh Makkar, the President of the S.G.P.C. in his Foreword, has claimed it. Avtar Singh Makkar calls it a work of 'outstanding merit' which 'will definitely fill up the ever left-out gaps regarding Sikh faith and its history' during the time

of Guru Arjan Sahib. S. Kirpal Singh Badungar calls it '**magnificent research work**'. A reading of the book however contradicts the statements of these two chiefs of the S.G.P.C. The biography of the Guru has been completed in just 18 pages. This is not enough narration of the role of a great architect, editor, social worker, humanist, city builder, organiser, spiritual soul and a martyr. Besides this biography is a poor translation of hagiographic and gossip stories not only of the Guru's early life but also his alleged yearning to have a baby (preferably a boy), which is in contradiction to the teachings of the Sikh Gurus. The scholars have since long rejected the propaganda that Guru Arjan Sahib wrote *Shabad Hazare* during his stay at Lahore in connection with the marriage of his cousin (page 55). The young Arjan ought not to have used Nanak as pen name in his verses before succession. Similarly Baba Buddha bestowing Guru Arjan (or his wife) with a son was an anti-Sikh propaganda of the Minas.

The author does not seem to have knowledge of history even. He mentions Mahadev, brother of Guru Arjan, as a '*bairagi*' (page 55), whereas Mahadev was an ascetic-type and not a *bairagi*. The Sikh Gurus did not anoint their successors with a *Tilak*, it was a Hindu ceremony but Dalbir Singh believes that the Gurus did follow the Hindu rituals. There was no '*Pasian ka/da Chowk*' at the time of Guru Sahib. This name is just 150 years old. It is still strange that if Mahadev was a '*bairagi*', then why did he need income from 'custom duty'. By the way there was no custom duty or octroi for the goods entering a Sikh city at the time of the Guru.

Was Darbar Sahib built in a tank just to give it a picturesque setting? The author calls it a 'temple' (page 57), whereas the S.G.P.C. has forbidden the use of the term temple for a Gurdwara. The author does not bother to use Sikh terminology. Further, he uses the term 'Gospel' for Guru Nanak Sahib's hymns (Gospel is a Christian scripture). He uses '*halo*' and 'healing power' for the water of the tank of Tarntaran (an un-Sikh like term).

The author writes that Akbar 'remitted the revenue of the Punjab for that year in complement to the Guru, who represented that there was a severe famine in the land and the cultivators required His Majesty's consideration' (page 62). In fact Akbar had remitted just 10% and not the whole revenue for the year (see; Abul Fazal's *Akbarnamah*). The author has presented a new research that Guru Arjan Sahib 'lent Khusrau some money as travelling expenses to Kabul' (page 63).

In 2006, Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, a BJP leader, addressing a S.G.P.C. congregation tried to exonerate Chandu for execution of Guru Arjan Sahib,

this learned author has tried to support her assertion (pages 67 and 148). He believes that Chandu did not play a major role and just instigated the *Qazis*, *Sheikhs* and Sulhi Khan.

The author asserts that Guru Arjan brought into the Sikh fold many Jats, which due to their 'sturdiness' played some special role. The author believes that Guru Arjan was 'faced with financial problems due to *langar* expenses. It means that *langar* eating *sangat* did not contribute to *langar* and were free-food seekers. 'The Guru was in dire need of money to complete construction of Amritsar *sarovar* and for *langar*, so he asked *masands* to visit *manji* holders for collection of offerings as frequently as possible (page 97).' Dalbir Singh believes that the Guru 'asked the Sikhs to pay a fixed sum of money to *Guru ki/di golak*' and the Guru used 'least force' to get this money. Did Guru Arjan Sahib fix an amount to be collected from the Sikhs, and could Guru have used force to charge money? Whereas all the historians agree that Guru Ramdas Sahib and not Guru Arjan Sahib had started the *Daswandh*. In fact *Daswandh* was voluntary offering and there was no question of sending collecting agents or fixing a sum and using force for the realization of the stipulated sum.

The author is very kind to inform us that Guru Arjan was a great scholar of *Gurmukhi* (not Punjabi) and Persian. Was the Guru a linguist, i.e. expert of *Gurmukhi* script? The author states that the 'Sikh institutions were based generally on **oral ethical code** of the Sikh Gurus (page 97). It is not true, the Sikh ethical code is not 'oral', and it is based on *Gurbani*, which is not 'oral'. The author has made another strange statement that not eating *langar* was considered a 'sin' (page 88). I had expected that a senior teacher will present a 'great research work' and the S.G.P.C. will produce a valuable work on the occasion of quad centenary of Guru Arjan Sahib, but a reading of the book creates frustration. The book is not even worth a master's degree dissertation. It seems that it is a compilation of material from some Master's Degree dissertations.

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BOOK-REVIEW – V

***Rethinking 1857 and the Punjab*, Edited by Dr Navtej Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2008, pp.VII + 278, Price Rs. 280/-.**

The Department of Punjab Historical Studies of the Punjabi University organized a seminar on 28 November 2007 to commemorate the great event of modern History of India that had taken place in the year 1857 and had reshaped the British empire including Punjab and the Sikh community. As we know the event 1857 was great because of its following results :

1. The British or colonial empire created by the conquests and diplomacy of the East India Company as patronized by the Govt. of England and the British parliament after 1773 A. D. was successful in capturing sovereignty from the Mughals to herself by crushing the mutiny of 1857 by defeating the Mughal emperor of Delhi.
2. Like the Mughals, the East India Company also lost its power to survive after 1858 when the British Crown took over the British empire and its allies connected with one another by military, trade and politico-constitutional means such as the subsidiary system of alliances after 1802 A.D.
3. The policy of annexations executed by Dalhousie and his communication and railway reforms as well as the Charter Act of 1853 gave a new designation to the Company Government when it was named as the Govt. of India. It happened after 1853 A.D.
4. In addition to the achievements of Dalhousie (1848-56) and the Charter Act of 1853, it was the centralization of the political system that responded to the uprising of 1857 by a new or unified system of military system which undermined the British reliance upon Awadh and her higher castes such as the Brahmins and the Rajputs. Like the Gurkhas, the Marathas, the Zats and the Sikhs also entered the new British system of army or defence and expansion in India, China and South-east Asia.
5. As to the causes and nature of 1857, it must be kept in mind that the emergence of Awadh in the 18th century had not only divided the

Mughal Empire but it had been used by the East India Company through Bengal Presidency against the Marathas, the Karnatka under Tippu Sultan and the Punjab during the Anglo-Sikh Wars (1846-49).

However, it was the annexation of Awadh by Dalhousie that did produce the military conflict between this region and the British empire in 1857.

Be as it may. The November seminar of Punjabi University was attended by 26 scholars from the various northern universities and academic cities. The scholarship that produced the book under review was comprised of scholars from the University of Delhi, H.P.U. Shimla, G.N.D.U. Amritsar and the Punjabi University, Patiala. The host university contributed the research papers both in English language and Punjabi. The book infact begins with the writings of Dr. Jaspal Singh, V.C. of the Punjabi University and Dr. Navtej Singh, Head of the Punjab Historical Studies. In his *Foreword* Dr. Jaspal Singh treats *Historiography* as "a continuous process of debate in historical scholarship". The debate provides 'space' for re-examination or re-thinking or re-evaluation of existing perceptions of particular events or historical developments. As a result the search for new evidence and different interpretations of human history emerges. He informs how the uprising of 1857 "has assumed national character". So much so that the nature of 1857 became further national by 1957, though the debate about this nature was also sharpened in 2007 i.e. 150th year of its commemoration. But Dr. Jaspal Singh shows one big limitation of the debate because 1857 was projected as "religion oriented and for its failure Sikhs were held responsible". However, the developing debate had other features too. First being nationalist it was 'non official perception'. In addition to it, the debate had 'Radical and Marxist perceptions'. Moreover, literature and memory did influence its academic and social relevance. In fact, the book *Rethinking 1857 and the Punjab* is expected to 'relocating position of the Sikhs in particular historical situations'.

Dr. Navtej Singh agrees with Dr. Jaspal Singh and writes in *Commencement* how the debate about the character of 1857 has been having "inter-related issues : one, nature of the happenings in 1857; two, role of the Sikhs". He projects the Sikh role.

Dr. Surjit Hans draws our attention through his inaugural address (pp.xii-xiii) to the Ghadar Movement and V.D.Savarkar taking 1857 as 'the Indian War of Independence'. For Hans the Ghadar movement's struggle for freedom was based upon religion and its inspiration.

Professor Dilip M.Menon in his article '1857 : An Interpretation in search of events' writes how there were three interpretations of 1857 that

treated this event as (I) mutiny, (II) rebellion and (III) the first war of independence (XV). Menon describes V.D.Savarkar as 'Hindu nationalist'. But Menon also treats the narratives of 1857 as given by (I) Ranjit Guha, (II) S.B.Chaudhuri, (III) R.C.Majumdar (IV) TRE Holmes, (V) Christopher Bayly, (VI) F.W.Bukler, and (VII) Eric Stokes (XIX). 'Changing Perspectives on 1857' is the article of Dr. P.K.Shukla (pp.1-14). He refers to Savarkar, Dr. Tara Chand, S.N.Sen and R.C.Majumdar and their works. For Shukla, Historiography of 1857 is rooted in (I) Imperialism and (II) Nationalism extendable to Marx and R.P.Dutt. For more and alternative needs Shukla refers to the works of K.M.Ashraf, Eric Stokes, Rudrangshu Mukherjee and Tapti Roy (pp.6-12).

A number of scholars from Punjab and North region had dealt with 1857 deeply and significantly. They as well as their writings can be summed up as :

Sr. No.	Name of Scholar	Title	Page of the book
1.	Dr. Sukhdev Singh Sohal	'Dance of Death at Ajnala'	15-27
2.	Dr. G.D.Gulati	'Martyrs of 1857 – Gurgaon District'	28-38
3.	Buta Singh	'Princely States of Punjab'	39-45
4.	Dr. Jagdish Pal Singh	'The Uprising of 1857: Scenario in Punjab'	46-50
5.	Dr. Shamsul Islam	'Sikhs and 1857 – Myths and Facts'	51-77
6.	Dr. Bir Good Gill	'1857 – The Punjab Situation'	78-89
7.	Dr. Amrit V.Gandhi	'Punjab in 1857 : A Reassessment'	90-100
8.	Dr. Ganda Singh	'The Indian Mutiny of 1857 and the Sikhs'	101-117
9.	Dr. Joginder Singh	'Uprising of 1857 and Kuka Movement'	118-136
10.	Dr. K.S.Bajwa	'1857 In Vernacular Literature'	140-148
11.	Dr. Navtej Singh	'1857 and the Ghadar Party : Image and Utilization'	149-156
12.	Dr. Shyamala Bhatia	'Punjab in 1857'	157-170

13. Harmeen 'Revolt of 1857 and the Punjab Perceptions' 171-77
14. Dr. Daljit Singh 'Punjab and the Revolt of 1857' 198-211
15. Other scholars from Patiala including Dr. Shiv Gajrani, Dr. H.K.Sharma, Jagdeep Singh, Balraj Singh.

The book under review has a portion of six articles in Punjabi language. They are the works of Dr. Sukhdial Singh, Dr. Gurmit Singh Sidhu, Surinder Singh Oberoy, Dr. K.C.Yadav, Dr. Harnam Singh Shan and Harsimranjit Kaur (pp.212-262).

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BOOK-REVIEW – VI

***Japji Sahib—Way to God in Sikhism*, by Maneshwar Singh Chahal, I.A.S. (Retd.), Prakash Books, 1, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, NEW Delhi, pp. 321.**

Japji Sahib, the foremost of Guru Nanak's composition, is the quintessence of his message and provides the key to the study of Sikh scripture, the *Granth Sahib*. *Japji Sahib—Way to God in Sikhism*, by Maneshwar Singh Chahal, a retired bureaucrat, is an indepth study of the Guru's revelatory message. The message encapsulated into thirty eight *Pauris* (steps) has been brilliantly captured by the author, who has devoted his twilight years to matters spiritual, especially relating to Sikh religion. Many other authors have rendered the *Japji Sahib* into English with a few explanatory foot-notes but without an in-depth coverage commentaries specifically on the *Japji Sahib* in the English language have been few.

Guru Nanak's religion is not an abstract mystic code but a living reality wakening doors to a spiritual dimension and raising the consciousness and existence of its followers to a higher level. Viewed in this context, *Japji Sahib* has been the guiding light, not only for millions of Sikh devotees but also for a wider audience of spiritual seekers from other faiths to lead their earthly sojourn. The universal and tuneless values of the Guru's Word need to be truthfully studied and interpreted and explained in the language and context of the times in which we live, so that they remain vibrant and alive, Guru's vision of the creation of the universe is amazingly modern and has been fully corroborated by modern scientific theories. Dynamic under-current of Guru's ideology has to be interpreted as a spiritual base rather a perennial fount of history and oneness of the spiritual and the empirical realms of human existence. Guru's holistic and comprehensive world-view has to be put into perspective in any meaningful interpretative exposition of Guru's message. Viewed from this angle most translations of *Japji Sahib* have

been inadequate and limited. Missing among them are related points of Guru's concepts and vision.

Chahal's book presents a wide spectrum of views of other authors like Prof. Sahib Singh, Gurbachan Singh Talib, Bhai Kahan Singh, Bhai Vir Singh, et al. His familiarity with the earlier interpretation combined with his profound insight into the scripture and keen mental perception animate his expositions with a charm and dignity. The work with a comprehensive introduction is divided into forty one chapters. The author deliberates upon the prime issues of Sikh theology like the nature of God, nature of the cosmos, man's relationship with the cosmos, the meaning and purpose of human life and the way of God-realisation.

The book begins with the text of the verses of *Japji* in Roman script as also in Gurmukhi. Individual words used in the composition have been explained and line-by-line commentary has been attempted. Chahal's translation and interpretation of *Japji* is purely from the view point of a devotee and is free from the baggage of predilections of scholars, who are bound by the methodologies of one discipline or the other and who cannot take unbiased and comprehensive view of such a vast subject.

Guru Nanak's message of world-affirmation and world participation with emphasis on truthful living and righteous action has eternal relevance for spiritual seekers all over the world. It can solve manifold problems confronting mankind. Chahal has no doubt, put this into perspective but he would have done better, if he had highlighted it in the context of the modern times. Nevertheless, Chahal's exposition of *Japji Sahib* deserves to be ranked as one of the best.

Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon

2059, 15-C, Chandigarh.

BOOK-REVIEW – VII

***Sexuality, Obscenity, Community : Women, Muslims and the Hindu Public in Colonial India*, by Charu Gupta, Permanent Black, Delhi, pp. xiv+388, price Rs. 350/-.**

The work revolves around two distinct issues : The reconstruction of patriarchy in North India and the emergence of aggressive forms of Hindu organisation and ideology over the same period. While exploring this intersection of gender with the assertion of Hindu cultural and political identities, it focuses particularly on U.P. in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It examines the process of construction of a homogenous community identity operated within and through a reworked and updated patriarchy, whereby it become crucial to control Hindu women.

It further explores the roots of the defence of morality and how in a specific colonial context, Hindu publicists redefined certain sexually explicit representations of women, especially in literature, as well as women's participation in popular cultural practices, in order to create an empowering modern Hindu identity. It locates the growth of Hindu communalism in everyday sites and relationship through the prism of gender. It is concerned with the rhetoric and representation of largely male Hindu publicists, mainly in print, that stereotypes, images and rhetorical structures were propagated. 'Hindu publicists' were those who used public media consciously or unconsciously to promulgate a particular 'Hindu' point of view, and who, through their activities and writings, asserted community differences and communal antagonisms, though from different perspectives and standpoints.

Hindu publicists sought to establish the honour, prestige and respectability of the Hindu household and family, to work out a definable community identity and a vibrant Hindu Nation. They were able to 'normalise' disciplinary strategies without overt coercion through mechanisms of surveillance and reworked codes of conjugality, law, clothes, hygiene and health. The vast didactic literature of the time reveals shifting narratives of respectability and chastity, stressing changes in the social and customary behaviour of women and a realignment of gender roles. These reformist endeavours implied the need for insidious control over women even as they had an

affinity with Hindu nationalist civilising rhetoric. Liberal advocacies such as education for women, doing away with *pardah*, and widow remarriage were subverted: reforms were often synonymous with regulation.

The situation also revealed the crisis of Hindu men and their anxieties. Denunciation of alternative sexualities and advertisements for aphrodisiacs jostled with promotions for sexual containment of the male and *brahmacharya* for national regeneration, and of assertions of masculinity in language debates. Confronting Western influence, their vocabulary embodied a modern India without jeopardising tradition. Even to the extent of levelling out social differentiation among Hindu community. Recurrent arguments emphasised the separation between the Hindu women and Muslim men much more than between upper caste Hindu women and lower caste Hindu men; signifying that for Hindu publicists communal identities became more crucial than caste identities. In this discourse lower-caste Hindus were much better than all Muslims. The advocacy for Hindu religious unity was imposed by 'superior' upper-caste values and practices.

On the other, strong opposition among upper-caste Hindus to inter-caste marriages was a hinderance. Even not many widow remarriages took place. That shared concepts had contested meanings, and that the lower castes tactically subscribed to dominant ideologies and gave weight to values of 'respectability' as a means of political self-expression to assert themselves in various competitive situations. Moreover, the active economic contribution of women in low-caste households, their greater freedom of movement, and a weaker attention to civilisational concerns may have meant that reformist values were often not implemented.

Women, especially of the upper-caste, were often complicit in practices that put taboos on their sexuality and desires on the one hand, and censured Muslims on the other. However, they seem to have simultaneously accepted and rejected caste-bound hierarchies and boundaries; they both appropriated and questioned homogeneous Hindu identities, both assimilated and distrusted religious symbols and rituals. The women vocabularies of enjoyment, desire and love were addressed and mitigated through songs, 'dirty' literature, ambiguous relationships and public movements. There were cultural reversals of the abduction discourse, fracturing the myth of the saintly Hindu and the lascivious Muslim.

At times women chose to defend their conversion as well. Elopements and conversions hint at love and romance. Women, who were often perceived as victims by Hindu communalists in their discourse on abduction, may from a feminist perspective have been actors by choosing elopement and

conversion. These cases belied the ideal of the Hindu family and drew attention to the women's sexuality, needs and desires. Women here were 'using' the instruments of conversion and elopement as a mode of coping with, challenging, and within limits transgressing on oppressive social order.

Women participated a lot more in public activities, both in the national movement and the print world. Yet the subversive activities of some women helped patriarchal chauvinism win over caste exploitation. As in the case of widows, anxieties about alliances between lower-caste Hindu women and Muslims could be used to win over lower-caste men to the cause of Hindu unity. Caste orthodoxy here converged with communal boundaries. That the projection of anxieties of lower-caste Hindu males around women vis-a-vis the 'other' was a more potent weapon than the cow-protection movements or the movement to establish Hindi as the language. Any transgression by women denoted a failure not only of women but more so of patriarchy – of all Hindu men, of the entire family and community.

Thus Charu Gupta's penetrating analysis of sexuality alongwith its socio-cultural and physical contexts of women belonging to a particular community under colonial situations, brings out hitherto un-explored area with new perspective to understand the construction and making of communalism. She deserves applause in capturing vital issues related to the controlled sexual behaviour and response of diverse social groups and categories in single religious entity. Yet the issue provides opportunity to further enquiry which may revolve around that was this a new phenomenon which occurred only under colonial environment ? Was it inherent in the social structure of the institution of marriage and family ? Or what are the mutual relationships between different sexual traditions ? What is the response of the 'other' (religious community) to similar situations of the same time ? Was there any relationship between the 'fear' of Hindu publicists and the pressure of historical environment ? Again, why it is only the question of control of women sexuality becomes central in the organised societies and institution of family, in other words, the pressure of evolutionary process of 'history' ? And lastly, what could be the alternative possibilities of human sexual behaviour and their future alongwith the popular and state effects in that direction ?

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BOOK-REVIEW – VIII

***Agricultural Growth under Colonial Constraints (in) The Punjab 1849-1947*, by Sukhwant Singh, Manpreet Prakashan, Delhi-Jalandhar, n.d., pp. 232, price Rs. 300/-.**

The book is full of instruction and delight. I feel myself a little more knowledgeable about my whereabouts and family history for having gone through the work.

It used to be said in the olden days that one who had not visited Lahore had been born in vain. One can know the reason why "In 1939-40, the Punjab formed about 12 percent of the total area as well as the net sown area in British India. It had 30 percent of the total irrigated area and 45 percent of the total irrigated area by the government canals of the total area under irrigated crops 29 percent was in the Punjab followed by United Provinces 22 percent, Madras 18 percent and Sind 9 percent. Punjab had 46 percent and 63 percent of its total area under wheat and cotton in British India of the total area under wheat and cotton 36 per cent and 20 percent more in the Punjab . . . The proportion of the yield was higher, 42 percent of wheat and 30 percent of cotton.'

The very comprehensiveness of Sukhwant Singh's research has fired a salvo at the ideology of growth. Development does not end poverty but poverty is the opposite pole of development in the given economic set-up. In the Punjab "prosperity and debt" were interrelated. Outside the colonies the debt was generally lowest in the poor and highest in the comparatively prosperous districts.

The emergence of new classes, such as the money-lenders and tenants was the outcome of the continuous rise in indebtedness on the one hand and the increase in the rate of land alienations on the other. The total mortgaged area in the province rose from 20 lac acres in 1877-78 to 31 lac in 1929-30. In 1932-33 the total cultivated area under usufructuary mortgages was 11.6 percent of the total cultivated in the province.

Within a few years of the introduction of the Tenancy Act of 1868 the proprietors tried to get rid of the tenants. In the Hissar district the number of

ejectment notices issued in 1878-79 was 4,780 and it rose to 15,246 in 1886-87 (It would be interesting to know whose brief Lala Lajpat Rai held when he was very richly practising law in Hissar).

The money lending class attracted lawyers and middlemen and all others ambitious . . . The number of bankers and money lenders in the Punjab in 1868 was 53,263. In the census of 1911 the figure rose to 1,93,980.

Towards the end of 1920s, the total net income of all money-lenders earning over rupees 500 annually was about rupees 500 lac. The net earnings of the North-Western Railways in 1917-18 was 764 lac. The net revenue of the major irrigation works for the same year was 264 lac.

(Under neo-liberalism a class below the working class—underclass—has come into being. A similar class came into being during this period). "In 1875-76, of the total cultivated area of the province, 44 percent was held by the tenants. It rose to 50 percent in 1901. In 1868, of the total number of agriculturists two-thirds were proprietors and one-third tenants. Increase in the number of the tenants at-will was even greater. Between 1872-73 and 1902-03, the number of tenants at-will increased by 360 percent and the occupancy rights by 143 percent while the increase in population was only 9 percent."

I vaguely feel that the efflorescence of folk culture in Jagraon-Moga belt of Malwa had its material foundation in the Sirhind canal (1885).

Prof. Sukhwant Singh can be a bit more careful about the use of words. On page 91, in the Punjab between 1849 and 1947 agriculture showed egregious (extraordinary in some bad way) progress.

Surjit Hans

144, Phase - XI,
Mohali.

BOOK-REVIEW – IX

***The Philosophical Perspective on Sikh View of Martyrdom*, by Nirbhai Singh, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2007, pp. XVI+411, Price Rs. 650/-.**

The book under scanner of the reviewer is well researched and rigorously argued philosophical original work. The author, Professor Nirbhai Singh has earned name in the philosophical circles of his erudition and philosophical maturity as a devout thinker of philosophy of religion (esp. Sikhism). Nirbhai Singh wades through different religious traditions for churning out crystallized cultural concept of the Sikh martyrdom propounded by the Gurus.

The present work is the outcome of his meditative reflections in the seclusion of the Summer-Hills at Indian Institute of Advanced Study at Shimla. The central theme of the book entails from the Sikh voluntarism, which assumes the form of martyrdom. The author was stunned to read Louis E. Fenech's book, *Martyrdom in the Sikh Tradition* (see preface, i). The author took the book as a heinous religious blasphemy because Fenech alleges in his book on page 28 (35fn.) that Guru Nanak did not understand the meaning of the concept of '*Shahadat*'. Nirbhai Singh argues to refute Fenech's thesis and derides in the 'Prolegomena' (pp.1-19) to controvert his ill-conceived thesis. The author substantiates his arguments from the primary Sikh canon and justifies that Guru Nanak developed his singular concept of martyrdom, which was translated into praxis. The book is the first philosophical treatise of its kind that deals in ramifications, the variant dimensions of martyrdom from the philosophical standpoint.

The work is based on the Western, the Semitic and the Indic religious traditions. The author has tried to trace the concept of martyrdom from the original Greek term '*euthanasia*', which connotes the heroic death. In the modern philosophical circles of bio-Ethics, the term has been distorted into mercy killing with a view to releasing the patient from incurable disease

(say, cancer). The author successfully applied the original Greek meaning of '*euthanasia*' on the Sikh concept of the Sikh martyrdom. The term traveled through arid deserts of Arabia and mountainous terrains of Persia, Afghanistan, *et al.* The terms '*euthanasia*'(Gr.) and '*shahadat*'(Arabic) have close family resemblance of 'witness to truth'. The concept does not imply only physical or heroic death. It is a cultural phenomenon that anchors on the tribal heroic tradition and the dynamic metaphysics of *The Guru Granth*. The hero stakes his life for the sake of his ideals, which the hero himself churns out to represent truth. Or he gets inspiration from a person of high dignity who puts the ideal before the hero as a test for being a witness to truth. The author has worked out the concept of the Sikh perspective of martyrdom from the standpoint of comparative stance.

The book, comprising of seventeen chapters, explores various aspects of martyrdom. It is a philosophical work of narrative of martyrdom in the Sikh epiphany of the Sikh Gurus from Guru Nanak to the time of the tenth mentor, Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Gobind Singh created an army of the *khalsa*, which is ever ready to offer supreme sacrifice for peace, justice, and truth. His grandfather Guru Arjan Dev was the first Sikh Guru who martyred himself for the cause of truth. His father Guru Tegh Bahadur, his four sons, great followers like Baba Deep Singh, Bhai Mani Singh and Banda Singh Bahadur are all legendary Sikh martyrs who were immersed in religious faith and philosophical vision of the transparent truth. Alongwith the narratives of the Sikh martyrs, the author's present compendium select list exalts martyrs of truth. He writes, "Martyrdoms of Socrates, Christ, Mansur- ul-Hallaj, two Sikh Gurus, four sons of Gobind Singh, *et al.*, are resplendent illustrations of 'martyrdom'; only a realized person of fortified will can martyr himself for the genuine cause of righteousness" (p.159). The author also shows how the supreme courage of Guru Tegh Bahadur, for the freedom of conscience of Kashmiri Pundits, was the outcome of his fortified will power. The reviewer wishes to put here on record that it was not expressed in the cry of agony of his grandson, Baba Jorawar Singh (11), when he saw Baba Fateh Singh (7) being bricked in the masonry. Tears swelled up in the former's eyes and uttered in heaving laconic response to himself : "What a strange tragic phenomenon that he [Fateh Singh] was born after him, but he got victory earlier!" Nonetheless, Baba Jorawar Singh assured his younger brother, "Never lament for losing life, dear brother. . . but the tears in my

eyes speak of my tragic fate, that younger to me you are being martyred for *Dharma*, now, that I passively, witness." It is one extinguishing lamp is lighting the other. One extinguishing spark will create thousands of sparks of heroes who will be ready to die for the cause of righteousness (*dharma*).

I seek to modify the reported roll of honour of martyrs. To me Gobind Rai (9) from the day he persuaded his father Guru Tegh Bahadur, through out his *Bichitra Natak* till the last mentor drops his mortal coils in 1708 is the very paradigm of martyr of faith. He baptized the five beloveds (*Panj Pyaras*) as the founders of the *Khalsa* in 1699 and then seeking to be himself baptized by them. In this process, the Guru demolished charismatic personality of the religious celebrities and infused martial spirit into the blood of the *khalsa*. He successfully steeled will of the subaltern sons of the motherland (*Bharat Mata*). He made the subalterns (sparrows) be daring to battle with the tyrant-hawks (Mughals). Through thick and thin years, he ceaselessly fought for righteousness. He resurrects heroic tradition of the Indian Epics. Thus, his entire life was an extended martyrdom over a short span of less than a half century. He is the *sthithyaprajna* or saint-soldier (*sant-sipahi*). He is the embodied life of fearlessness (*nirbhau*) and without enmity (*nirvair*). The ideal *Khalsa* of Guru Gobind Singh is a moving epiphany of the *Akalapurakh*. His dauntless treatise on liberty is treasured in his *Jaffarnama* (An Apostle of Victory) sent to the tyrant Aurangzeb in 1705. It is a great testament of victory of conscience of the Guru over hypocrisy of the temporal Emperor, Aurangzeb. I am confident that the scholar in Nirbhai Singh will agree to my resuscitated suggestion. I am convinced that all issues relating to the Divinity and transcendence of our home are pre-empted in the martyr's life absorbed wholly in the one Divine (*Ek Onkar*).

The following words mention some significant multi-tiered analyses that the scholarly treatise offers as semiotics, hermeneutics or axiology of the martyrs who are deeply entrenched in historical great religions of the world.

Nirbhai Singh's philosophical critique of martyrdom takes Guru Nanak's well-known plea: if anyone wants to love truth, he should forget death (i.e., *jau tau prema khelan ka chaau /siru dhari tali gali meri aau...* (20)/ *Guru Granth*, p. 1412). It is ingrained in *Ishq Haqiqi* that those who die (*fana*) of their earthly-self are reborn like the mythical bird phoenix to serve

the cause of the wretched persons. This is well-propounded utterance on the stake by the Sufi; like, Mansur-ul-Hallaj, Sarmad and many others. Nirbhai Singh quotes Mansur (p.122), "I am the creative Truth" (*an-ul-Huqq*), he adds, "for achieving ideally created self (*natura naturans*). The Sufi embraces the path of self-sacrifice of the empirical self (*fana*) through true love (*ishq Haqiqi*). The moth immolates itself into the fire to absorb itself with the fire". Nirbhai Singh rightly asserts that the martyr dies physical death, but awakens to eternal life. He becomes a public property for worship as a perennial source of inspiration for the coming generations.

Likewise, Sarmad when he was eyeball to eyeball with his executioner holding naked sword, said with serene quiet, "Come, come in whatever form. Your appearances, I have known long. Now I see you in real form" (p. 87).

It is a philosophical premise that one dissolves egoism in the infinitude of the Divine. It was first expounded by the *Chandogya Upanishad* that we finite beings are like grains of salt, aspiring to find the depth of the ocean! We never return to tell it.

The book is very highly recommended to those who are interested in understanding philosophical perspective of the Gurus, which was developed from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. It will cleanse the dust of opacity for seeing into the transparent truth. The Gurus put to test their utterances in history and struck optimal synthesis between theory and praxis. There were no contradictions in their sayings and doing.

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BOOK-REVIEW – X

***Guru Gobind Singh : Historical And Ideological Perspective*, by Madanjit Kaur, Unistar Books Pvt. Ltd., Chandigarh, 2007, pp.vii-xv+280.**

Professor Madanjit Kaur has been a well-known scholar in the domain of Sikh studies and the Punjab society and its connections with Sikh ideas and effort since the very foundation of Sikhism of Guru Nanak (1469-1539 A.D.). She has written on the heritage of Punjab on the past of the Golden Temple as well as the sacred poetry of Guru Arjan including *Sukhmani*. The list of her writings between 1982 and 2004 demonstrates Dr.Kaur's attitude towards Sikh policy and endeavour. To her, Sikh ideology has a 'global vision' to be fulfilled by or through the Sikh institutions including the Khalsa, created by Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708 A.D.) in 1699 A.D.

Professor Madanjit knows 'the history and thought of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji' but she stands equally conscious about and committed to the relevance of 'a pure academic exercise' (Preface). It does not mean that she is free of devotion or sentiments for the teachings of the 10th Guru or 'the growth of new traits in the process of socio-cultural revival and rise of freedom consciousness in the political history of India conferred by the founder of Khalsa since 1699 A.D. Dr.Kaur declair this worthy founder as the profenitor of the democratic revolution in India' (Preface-vii). Infact, the book of Dr. Kaur under review is for the readers, researchers, students, devotees and serious scholars of Sikhism comparative philosophy and history (*ibid.* - ix). Further, the scholar is concerned with 'indifference to human sufferings, communal politics, tension, suspicious and distrust between majority and miniority communities (*ibid.* - viii) in our country.

This book under consideration maintains that "history is a recognition of human freedom which attunes to the divine will ' and it is not be to determined by the nexus of historical laws and myths (introduction-xii). Obviously, Dr. Kaur has a metaphysical notion of history as well. As a

result of this approach, she looked upon the mission of Guru Gobind Singh as "lightening from the heaven" that "infused new life and a spirit of self-confidence into almost dead people and encouraged them to stand up and light against the exploitation of an autocratic state" (*ibid.* - xii). In this way, 'the service of humanity was its religion' for the Khalsa. On the whole the philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh "gave a new set of universal values and a programmatic humanitarian vision for the formation of global society" (*ibid.* - xv).

Interestingly, Dr. Kaur's chapter 01 deals with the mission of Guru Gobind Singh. Further, this mission or chapter-01 employs the *Dasam Granth* or *Dasam Patshah Ka Granth*, and reminds us that the *Granth* do have an autobiographical monologue through its chapter seventh (p.3).

Chapter-02 of the book under review is entitled 'Armed Struggle' (pp.24-36). Dr. Kaur has used here the Mughal official sources too on the basis of *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mu'alla*. We are told that the emperor, Bahadur Shah revered Guru Gobind Singh to whom he described as *Darveli* and "received him as Guest of Honour" (p.31). The chapter in her book links the articles of faith of and for Khalsa to the thought of Guru Gobind Singh. Dr. Kaur rejects the idea of W.H.McLeod and J.S.Grewal who have traced this faith with reference to the impact of the 18th century *Zat Culture* (p.37). She correctly points out how *Gur Sobha* shows the essence of the mission and practice of Guru Gobind Singh (p.39). Here, the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur in the times of Aurangzeb to emerge very significant as this event comes as "the cymbal of the rising Sikh reaction and resistance" (p.42). As a result Sikhism acquired a "new consciousness of strength and self confidence and entered into the final stage of its struggle" (*ibid.*). Obviously, the faith of Khalsa was not the religious named Hinduism (pp. 44-45). Khalsa stood for a universal culture (p.45). Also it was a fight for justice.

The Sikh religious independence or separatism has been advocated by Dr. Kaur when she concludes about the articles of faith for the Khalsa pronounced by the 10th Guru. To her, the founder of Khalsa shaped the cultural environment of the Sikhs and "determined the guarantee of a distinct identity and its permanence in the course of history."

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